NATION

SC seeks fresh report on Biren audio clips

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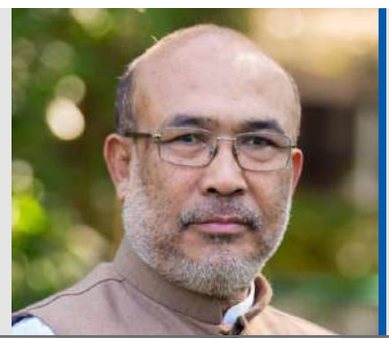

BUSINESS

War will impact Pak's economy more than India's

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Playoff favourites MI & GT set for explosive IPL clash

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Russia backs India as China supports Pak

Amid war fears, Putin accepts PM's invitation to visit India; Japan offers 'full support' to Delhi

NEW DELHI/MOSCOW/ ISLAMABAD, 5 MAY

Global reactions are intensifying following the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians, with Russia and Japan reaffirming support for India, while Pakistan seeks mediation and China backs its ally Islamabad.

In a phone call on Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned the attack as "barbaric" and expressed full support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India's fight against terrorism. He stressed that the perpetrators must be brought to justice and accepted Modi's invitation to visit India for the annual India-Russia summit. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening their strategic partnership.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's ambassador to Moscow, Mohammad Khalid Jamali, urged Russia to help de-escalate tensions, citing its past mediation during the 1966 Tashkent Agreement. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in a separate call with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, encouraged both nations to resolve the crisis bilaterally under the 1972 Simla Accord and 1999 Lahore Declaration.

Japan also voiced strong solidarity with India. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, after meeting Japanese counterpart Gen Nakatani in Delhi, thanked Japan for condemning the attack and offering full support. Both leaders discussed deepening defence cooperation and combating cross-border terrorism. In Islamabad, Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong met President Asif Ali Zardari and reaffirmed China's support for Pakistan. Zardari criticised India's post-attack actions, including trade bans and diplomatic downgrades, calling them threats to regional peace.

China reiterated its commitment to helping Pakistan maintain regional stability.

The Pahalgam attack, the worst in Kashmir since Pulwama in 2019, has significantly strained India-Pakistan relations. India has responded with strict measures, including halting trade, suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, and closing the Attari land border. —*PTI*

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PM Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping & Pak PM Shehbaz Sharif ***PICS: PTI***

Pakistan threatens India with nukes

MOSCOW, 5 MAY

Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia Muhammad Khalid Jamali has warned that Islamabad would respond with the "full spectrum of force, including nuclear," if attacked or if India disrupts its vital water supply.

At the same time, Army Chief General Asim Munir said Pakistan will respond with "full force" to preserve its "national prestige" and wellbeing of its people.

In an interview with Russia's state-run TASS agency, Jamali said any attempt to stop or divert water under the Indus Waters Treaty, which India suspended last week, would be viewed as an act of war. "We will respond with full force," he stated.

Despite the threat, Jamali called for de-escalation, citing the risks involved between two nuclear-armed nations. He urged international powers, including Russia and China, to support a neutral investigation into the Pahalgam attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists.

The ambassador claimed that the Kashmir issue remains the root cause of conflict and called for implementation of UN resolutions on self-determination.

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar also held a phone call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Sunday, seeking Moscow's assistance in defusing tensions.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a high-level security review with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Home Secretary Govind Mohan at his office, as India continues to assess its oresponse to Pakistan. Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned that India could carry out a military strike at any moment along the Line of Control in Kashmir. —*PTI*

Pakistan's ambassador to Russia, Muhammad Khalid Jamali ***PHOTO: X@ MUHAMMADKJAMALI***

CENTRE ORDERS SECURITY DRILLS ON 7 MAY

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Union Home Ministry has instructed several states to carry out mock drills on 7 May in response to escalating tensions with Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack. The last such drill was conducted in 1971, the year in which India and Pakistan went to war on two fronts.

Government sources indicated that the drills will include activating air raid warning sirens and training civilians on civil defence measures to ensure their safety during a potential "hostile attack". Additional preparations encompass implementing crash blackout protocols, camouflaging critical installations, and updating evacuation plans along with rehearsals. —*PTI*

MILITARY SOLUTION IS NO SOLUTION: UN

United Nations, 5 May

UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Monday voiced concern over tensions between India and Pakistan being at "at their highest in years" and called for "maximum restraint and stepping back from the brink". "Make no mistake: A military solution is no solution," Guterres said.

Guterres offered his "good offices" to both governments in the service of peace. His remarks came hours before closed consultations of the UN Security Council on India-Pakistan tensions after Islamabad sought an emergency meeting. "Targeting civilians is unacceptable – and those responsible must be brought to justice through credible and lawful means," he said. —*PTI*

BSF arrests Pak national for entering India

GURDASPUR, 5 MAY

The Border Security Force (BSF) has apprehended a Pakistani national who unlawfully entered Indian territory, officials reported on Monday. On the night of 3 May, BSF troops stationed at Border Out Post Sahapur observed unusual activity near Falku Nala, approximately 250 metres inside India. An unidentified individual, later identified as 24-year-old Husnain from Gujranwala, was discovered hiding in bushes. The BSF, in coordination with the Quick Reaction Team, cordoned off the area and successfully detained him late at night. Upon interrogation, authorities recovered some Pakistani currency and an identity card. Further investigations are ongoing. This incident follows the recent apprehension of a Pakistani ranger along the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan amid heightened tensions between the two nations. —*PTI*

PM chairs meet to appoint new CBI director

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday chaired a meeting of the committee for the appointment of CBI Director which was also attended by Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna. The meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office here on Monday. The meeting comes ahead of the end of the two-year term of incumbent CBI Director Praveen Sood on 25 May. Sood, a 1986-batch IPS officer of Karnataka cadre, was director general of police (DGP) of the state prior to his appointment. He took over as the Director of the premier investigative agency on 25 May, 2023. The appointment of the CBI Director is done by the central government on the recommendation of a three-member appointment committee, which is headed by the Prime Minister and comprises the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India. —*PTI*

Pak cyber attackers claim they hacked Indian defence websites

The group also tried to deface the website of Armoured Vehicle Nigam Limited

SRINAGAR, 5 MAY

Pakistani hackers on Monday targeted Indian defence websites. According to sources within the defence establishment, sensitive information pertaining to defence personnel, including login credentials, may have been compromised.

A group identified on social media platform X as "Pakistan Cyber Force" has claimed to have accessed confidential data from the Military Engineer Services and the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses. Officials noted that there was also an attempt to deface the website of the Armoured Vehicle Nigam Limited, a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defence, which has since been taken offline for a comprehensive audit to gauge the damage and secure its integrity.

- Cybersecurity experts, the sources said, are actively monitoring cyberspace to detect any additional attacks, particularly those that may be sponsored by threat actors linked to Pakistan.

Another post had a list of names, ostensibly of Indian defence personnel, with a message: "Hacked. Your security is illusion. MES data owned." The handle claimed that it had accessed more than 10 GB data of 1,600 users on the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses website. The Pakistan Cyber Force handle, now withheld in India, had posted images of a webpage from Armoured Vehicle Nigam Limited. In the image, an Indian tank had been replaced by a Pakistani tank.

Cybersecurity experts and authorities are on high alert, actively monitoring for any further cyber-attacks. —*PTI*

HC bins RCB's plea against Uber Moto Ad

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

In a significant ruling, the Delhi High Court has rejected a request by Indian Premier League team Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to block a YouTube advertisement from Uber Moto featuring cricketer Travis Head of Sunrisers Hyderabad. The court found no prima facie case for disparagement or trademark infringement, describing the advertisement as a display of "healthy banter and good-natured lighthearted humour."

Justice Saurabh Banerjee stated there was no evidence within the ad that demeaned or ridiculed RCB's trademark. RCB's legal team argued that the ad depicted Head vandalising their stadium sign and suggested a connection to the term "Royally Challenged," but the court dismissed these claims, asserting the advertisement was in the spirit of sportsmanship. The ruling underscores the court's stance on advertising's role in promoting good humour, rejecting RCB's view as overly critical. Uber's ad, which has since garnered 1.3 million views, will remain accessible following the court's decision. —*PTI*

LISTED FOR 15 MAY

Judge Gavai to hear Waqf Act as CJI bows out of case

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Supreme Court of India has announced that it will take up pleas challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act on 15 May, following the retirement of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna on 13 May. The case will be presided over by Chief Justice of India-designate, Justice BR Gavai.

During a recent hearing, Chief Justice Khanna noted the need for clarification on several aspects raised by the Centre regarding the registration of Waqf properties. He stated, "Some figures referred to by the Centre, disputed by the other side, will have to be dealt with and the case needs a reasonably early hearing." Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, expressed regret regarding the Chief Justice's imminent retirement, acknowledging the time constraints on the case.

The Centre, in defence of the Waqf Act, previously assured the court that it would not denotify any Waqf properties or make appointments to the central Waqf council until 5 May. The government argued that the Act was passed following "due deliberations" and rebuffed calls for a blanket stay on its provisions.

On 25 April, the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs submitted a detailed 1,332-page affidavit defending the amended act and highlighting an increase in Waqf properties since 2013. The Centre urged the court to dismiss the pleas, asserting that a stay would create unintended consequences, particularly for the Muslim community.

The Waqf (Amendment) Act was signed into law by President Droupadi Murmu on 5 April, following approval from both houses of Parliament. —*PTI*

K'taka govt launches enumeration of Scheduled Castes

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the enumeration of Scheduled Castes commenced on Monday, running until 17 May. A second phase from 19 to 21 May will include dedicated camps for those missed in the initial phase, while an online registration phase will also begin on May 19 and continue until 23 May, allowing residents outside their towns to participate.

A commission led by retired High Court Judge Justice HN Nagamohan Das has been established to gather data on 101 castes within the SC list, with a report due in 60 days. The project, costing Rs 100 crore, will employ 65,000 teachers as enumerators. Siddaramaiah emphasised the need to rectify discrepancies among SC classifications and urged community participation in the initiative. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

CAGED MODI EFFIGY

India fumes over Khalistan parade in Canada

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

India strongly objected to a recent anti-Hindu parade in Toronto, condemning the display of "unacceptable imagery" and threatening rhetoric targeting Indian leadership. Official sources confirmed that New Delhi has conveyed its concerns in the "strongest terms" to the Canadian High Commission.

The controversial parade, organised by Khalistani sympathisers at the Malton Gurdwara in Toronto, included a truck mock-up of a jail featuring effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. Demonstrators reportedly called for the deportation of 8,00,000 Hindus to India.

Demonstrators reportedly called for the deportation of 8,00,000 Hindus to India ***PHOTO: PTI***

A video of the event has gone viral on social media, sparking widespread outrage. It comes amid rising concerns over incidents of vandalism involving pro-Khalistan graffiti on both Sikh gurdwaras and Hindu temples in Canada.

"We once again call on the Canadian authorities to act against anti-India elements who spread hatred and advocate extremism and separatist agendas," said a government source.

The video was originally posted by a Hindu community leader in Canada, who labelled the event as "blatant anti-Hindu hatred" perpetrated by Khalistani extremists. Canadian journalist Daniel Bordman also criticised the lack of governmental response, tweeting, "The jihadis rampaging through our streets have done significant damage to the social fabric... But the Khalistanis are giving them a good run for their money." Bordman questioned whether a potential Mark Carney-led government would differ from Justin Trudeau's in addressing these issues. India continues to urge Canada to take decisive action to curb rising extremism and safeguard its diaspora. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

CM to visit Mandya on 8 May for key events

MANDYA, 5 MAY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will visit Mandya on 8 May to participate in several official programmes, announced C.D. Gangadhar, President of MySugar and the District Congress Committee. He will lay the foundation stone for the new MDCC Bank administrative office near Girija Theatre, unveil a bronze statue of Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar at the MySugar factory, and lay the foundation stone for a Boys' Hostel at Kanaka Bhavan. The hostel event will be presided over by ML Suresh and attended by Shivanandapuri Swamiji. Agriculture Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy, Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, and several other state ministers and MLAs will also be present, alongside Congress leaders and organisation representatives. —*Salar News*

Underground cable explodes near Chandapura

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

A minor explosion caused by a faulty underground power cable in Bannahalli near Chandapura on Monday morning sparked panic among residents but fortunately resulted in no injuries. The blast occurred around 11.20am, moments after a water tanker passed over the road, sending concrete debris flying nearly 100m and igniting a brief fire. Locals, startled by the noise and flames, rushed indoors fearing a larger disaster. KPTCL officials responded swiftly. Junior Engineer Mahesh explained that a sagging 220kV transmission line, degraded by prolonged heat exposure, allowed fault current to enter the earthing zone when the heavy vehicle passed, causing the explosion. The aged cable, part of the power route from Yerrandahalli to Tamil Nadu, had not been upgraded for years. —*Salar News*

Youth hacked to death near Mysuru in pre-dawn attack

MYSURU, 5 MAY

A 33-year-old man, Karthik, was brutally hacked to death by a gang of five near a restaurant in Varuna, on the outskirts of Mysuru, in the early hours of Monday. Police suspect personal enmity as the motive. Karthik, a known rowdy shooter from Kyathamaranahalli, was reportedly lured to the location by his girlfriend, Lakshmi, under the pretext of dinner. Based on a complaint filed by Karthik's mother, Shanathakumari, Varuna police have registered a case against his rival Praveen, Lakshmi, and three others. —*Salar News*

Youth arrested for provocative post targeting CM

UDUPI, 5 MAY

A youth has been arrested for posting a provocative message on social media targeting Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and attempting to incite communal disharmony, police said on Monday. The accused, identified as Sampath Salian from Karkala, who was employed at the Home Guard office in Bengaluru, posted a message on Instagram on 2 May claiming, "If CM Siddaramaiah is killed, Hindus will have peace." Acting on a complaint lodged by Suraj Kukkundoor of Karkala, the town police registered a case. The accused was traced and taken into custody from Bengaluru on Monday, police added. The intent behind the post appeared to be the promotion of communal enmity. Salian was produced before a local court, which remanded him in judicial custody for 14 days. —*Salar News*

Govt begins survey of State's SC community

The three-phase exercise will continue till 23 May

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar during a press conference in Bengaluru on Monday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the first phase of the enumeration of Scheduled Castes (SC) started on Monday, and it will go on till 17 May. The second phase will be held between 19 and 21 May, and camps will be organised as part of this phase for the benefit of those who were left out in the first phase.

The third phase, meant for online registration, will be held from 19 to 23 May. People who live outside their towns can make use of this leg, Siddaramaiah said.

"The enumeration of SC is going on in the state. A one-man commission led by retired High Court Judge Justice HN Nagamohan Das has been mandated to give a clear report on the sub quota for castes in the SC list," he said.

Siddaramaiah said the Commission has to submit its report in 60 days. Rs 100 crore will be spent on the exercise and 65,000 teachers will be roped in as enumerators. He said the purpose of this exercise is to prepare empirical data on 101 castes in the SC list.

The CM said the Supreme Court verdict dated 1 August, 2024, in the case of the state of Punjab and others versus Devender Singh and others, upheld the constitutionality of sub-classification within SCs. "Based on the apex court order, we have formed the Justice Nagamohan Das commission," he said.

Siddaramaiah said there are discrepancies in the status of some scheduled castes. While castes such as Adi Dravida, Adi Karnataka and Adi Andhra are in the 'Left' category in some places, they are in the 'Right' category in other places.

The commission will give clear recommendations and prepare empirical data, he said.

A mobile application has also been developed and a helpline number (94813 59000) has been allotted for this purpose, Siddaramaiah said. He appealed to the people of SC communities in the state to come forward and make this exercise a success. —*PTI*

PROTOCOL OR SACRILEGE?

2 arrested for asking NEET candidates to remove janivara

KALABURAGI, 5 MAY

Two staff members were arrested after allegedly asking a NEET candidate to remove his janivara (sacred thread worn by Brahmins) before entering an exam centre in Kalaburagi on 4 May. The incident occurred at a private examination centre during the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), sparking protests and community outrage.

Based on the candidate's complaint, Kalaburagi police registered an FIR against the two staff members, who were deputed by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for frisking duty. Both individuals, employed by an external agency, were arrested on Sunday evening and released later on station bail, as the offence was bailable.

Kalaburagi City Police Commissioner Sharanappa S D confirmed the arrests and said legal action had been initiated. The incident reportedly took place on Sunday when Shripad Patil, a student from Basavakalyan, arrived at St. Mary's School in Kalaburagi to write the NEET exam. The invigilators allegedly stopped him and insisted he remove his janivara before entering the exam hall. The incident triggered protests by members of the Brahmin community outside the exam centre, demanding accountability and calling the action discriminatory and insensitive to religious sentiments. Protesters claimed that multiple candidates were either forced to remove their sacred threads or had them cut before entering the exam hall.

This incident follows a similar controversy during the CET for engineering and vocational courses on 16 April, when Brahmin boys were also allegedly asked to remove their sacred threads. Authorities have promised a thorough investigation to prevent recurrence —*Salar News with Agencies*

Lawyer on NICE Road died in hit-and-run crash

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

The death of 45-year-old advocate Jagadish H, whose bludgeoned body was discovered on NICE Road on Saturday, is now believed to be a hit-and-run accident during a road rage incident.

It was initially suspected to be a murder. Initial reports suggesting a assault with sharp weapons led a relative of the victim to file a murder complaint at Kengeri Police Station.

Following a detailed probe and review of CCTV footage, police concluded that Jagadish, a resident of Ullal and native of Malavalli in Mandya, died after a hit-and-run. While returning home, his car reportedly scraped against a truck. The lorry driver pulled over a short distance ahead, and Jagadish stopped to confront him. During the ensuing argument, Jagadish stepped onto the road and was struck by another speeding truck.

The impact caused severe head injuries, and he died on the spot due to excessive bleeding. The second truck driver, unaware he had hit someone, stopped half a kilometre ahead to inspect his vehicle and then continued driving.

Jagadish's body was found roughly 100 metres from his parked car, which still had its parking lights on. The Kengeri police have since detained the truck driver involved for questioning and are awaiting the post-mortem report to finalise the case. —*Salar News*

MAN HELD FOR KILLING WIFE OVER DOWRY

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

A 43-year-old man has been arrested by the Basaveshwaranagar police for allegedly killing his wife over dowry demands.

The accused, Lokesh Kumar Gehlot alias Lalit, lived with his wife Namitha and their child in Mahaganapathi Nagar. He owned the Colours Digital Studio in Cubbonpet.

Police said he had been forcing his wife Namitha to get money from her parents to expand his business and purchasing a plot in the city. This led to frequent quarrels between the two, they said.

On 24 April, during a phone call from her brother around 6pm, Namitha reportedly asked Lokesh to put the call on speaker. An argument broke out between the couple, which quickly escalated. In a fit of rage, Lokesh allegedly strangled her to death and fled from the house. —*Salar News*

AFTER SUICIDE ATTEMPT

Cops nab undertrial who escaped from Victoria

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

An undertrial prisoner who had escaped from the Trauma Care Centre at Victoria Hospital has been arrested from Tumakuru bus stand, city police said on Monday.

Chandrashekhar, the accused facing trial in a robbery case, had allegedly attempted suicide on 2 May. He was admitted to the prison hospital for treatment and later shifted to Victoria Hospital under police watch.

Although he was secured to his hospital bed with leg cuffs, Chandrashekhar managed to unlock the restraints and escape from the trauma centre on Saturday. His escape triggered a frantic search operation by VV Puram police and prison authorities.

A day after being on the run, Chandrashekhar was spotted at Tumakuru bus stand around 8.20pm on Sunday and was detained by the jurisdictional police. Acting on a tip-off, VV Puram police along with jail officials took custody of him and brought him back to Bengaluru. The preliminary investigation into Chandrashekhar's escape highlighted lapses on the part of the personnel guarding him. An internal inquiry is underway. Chandrashekhar is currently being held at the VV Puram police station for further questioning. —*Salar News*

K'TAKA TO HOST MEET TO BOOST INVESTMENT

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

The Karnataka government has announced it will organise a two-day strategic conference titled 'Uthpadhana Manthana', aimed at advancing the state's global manufacturing aspirations. Set for 30 and 31 May in Bengaluru, the conference will be chaired by State Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, MB Patil.

The event is expected to attract top CEOs from the manufacturing sector alongside representatives from rapidly growing startups for in-depth discussions. The primary objective is to establish a comprehensive, actionable roadmap to boost Karnataka's investment appeal and stimulate long-term industrial growth. Minister Patil highlighted the conference as a vital platform for engagement with industry leaders. —*PTI*

2 booked for posts on M'luru tension

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Two separate FIRs have been registered against social media users for allegedly spreading misinformation and provocative content likely to disturb communal harmony in the coastal City, police said on Monday.

According to a statement issued by the Mangaluru City Police, in the first case, a complaint was lodged against the user of the social media account "vikash p" for sharing false and inflammatory content on Instagram.

The post claimed that "Suhas Shetty's murder was orchestrated by the head of the group that had earlier received compensation," suggesting a larger conspiracy behind the murder incident in the city.

The second FIR named 'X' user "Rahul Shivashankar," who allegedly posted content claiming that the murder of Suhas Shetty was an act of revenge for the killing of Fazil and was financed using compensation funds (Rs 25 lakh) provided by the Karnataka government to Fazil's family.

The post further claimed that Rs 3 lakh was paid to the accused, Abdul Safwan, to carry out the killing. —*PTI*

YADGIR GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBER HITS PDO WITH SLIPPERS

YADGIR, 5 MAY

A Gram Panchayat member and her brother allegedly attacked a Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) with chilli powder and assaulted him with a slipper in Doranhalli, Shahapur taluk on Monday.

The victim, Devaraj Rangappa Chalavadi, PDO of Doranhalli Gram Panchayat, was en route to a gram sabha meeting on Saturday. According to Devaraj's complaint, Tayamma Srikant Teganoor, a Gram Panchayat member, and her brother Manjunath Basappa Anwar, confronted the duo, threw chilli powder into his eyes, and Tayamma struck him on the face and back with a slipper.

The attack reportedly caused injuries and obstructed Devaraj from performing his official duties. A case has been registered at Shahapur Police Station. In a counter-complaint filed at the same station, Tayamma has accused PDO Devaraj and seven others of caste-based harassment and insult.

The accused in her complaint include Panchayat President Chandravati Dore, Vice President Eeranna Kasan, and members Arif Math, Mahantagouda Nandikol, Vijaykumar Malagonda, and Siddanna Desai. —*Salar News*

LANGUAGE PRIDE

K'taka Film Chamber boycotts Sonu Nigam

Kannada Raksha Vedike protest against Sonu Nigam over his Kannada remarks during a concert, in Bengaluru on Monday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

The Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) on Monday announced a 'non-cooperation' campaign against Bollywood singer Sonu Nigam for his controversial remark during a recent concert in Bengaluru.

KFCC president M Narasimhulu said, "There will be non-cooperation with Sonu Nigam across Karnataka. It's just like a ban. He should apologise to the people of Karnataka."

The incident took place at the East Point College of Engineering and Technology in Virgonagar on 25 and 26 April, and the singer is currently under investigation.

According to reports, a young man allegedly insisted that Sonu Nigam sing in Kannada during the concert, which resulted in a heated exchange. Nigam reportedly said, "Kannada.

Kannada. This is the reason behind the incident in Pahalgam."

Dharma Vish, General Secretary of the Karnataka Film Musicians' Association, said, "Nigam is one of the best talents that India and Kannada have seen.

The controversy is not about his talent – it is about what he said, which has deeply hurt the sentiments of Kannadigas. Comparing a person or people from a state to terrorists is extremely damaging."

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike has also staged a protest against singer Sonu Nigam at Freedom Park in Bengaluru for his statement.

Dharmaraj A, the president of the Bengaluru City District Unit of Karnataka Rakshana Vedike, on 3 May registered a case against Nigam.

He accuses Nigam of making "objectionable and emotionally provocative" statements that have hurt the sentiments of the Kannadiga community and incited hatred among various linguistic communities in Karnataka. —*Agencies*

> **I am 51 years old. I am entitled to taking offence for someone as young as my son threatening me in front of thousands in the name of language that too Kannada which is my second language when it comes to my work**
>
> -Sonu Nigam, Singer

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar emphasised the urgent need to protect India's forests and agriculture PHOTO: X/@VPINDIA

Protect forests: Dhankhar

SIRSI, 5 MAY

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday described climate change as a "cliff-hanging" global crisis and emphasised the crucial role of forests as the "lungs" of the nation.

Speaking at a special programme on the 'Role of Forestry in Nation Building' at the College of Forestry in Sirsi, Dhankhar highlighted the vital connection between healthy forests and public well-being. "Agriculture is our lifeline, but forests are equally essential—they regulate climate, buffer disasters, and support livelihoods, especially for the poor and marginalised," he said.

Urging citizens to protect forests, he warned against reckless exploitation of natural resources and called for mindful consumption. "We must consume only what is necessary and recognise our role as trustees of Earth's ecosystems," he stated.

Drawing on India's civilisational values, Dhankhar underscored the deep roots of sustainability in Vedic culture and stressed the need for sustainable development as an economic and ecological imperative.

He also called for an inclusive, interdisciplinary approach to education, noting that subjects like medicine, engineering, and environmental science should no longer be studied in isolation. Encouraging students to explore forestry's potential for innovation, he said, "Our cultural heritage is a treasure trove. The more you explore, the better you can serve creation."

Dhankhar concluded by urging everyone to rise to the environmental challenges of the time and protect nature for future generations. —*PTI*

SC dismisses PIL for safety of tourists in J&K

New Delhi, 5 May
The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a PIL seeking safety of tourists in remote hilly areas of Jammu and Kashmir in view of the recent Pahalgam terror attack. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh pulled up advocate Vishal Tiwari for filing the PIL, saying "The petitioner is indulging in filing one after the other PIL in which the primary aim appears to be to get publicity with no real interest in the public cause." Justice Surya Kant further remarked, "What is your real motive? Don't you understand the sensitivity of the issue?" *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Kejri, Sisodia challenge excise policy chargesheet

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Delhi High Court is set to hear on 12 August petitions by AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia challenging the trial court's decision to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) chargesheet regarding the alleged excise policy scam. Representatives for the ED argued that the petitions, filed in 2024, are irrelevant now that the agency has received the necessary sanction to prosecute Kejriwal and others. Kejriwal contends that the special court improperly took cognisance on 9 July, 2024, without the required approval for prosecuting a public servant. Sisodia raised similar concerns centred on official acts performed in his capacity. Both leaders are seeking to overturn the trial court's order and quash case proceedings. Kejriwal has secured interim bail from the Supreme Court in both ED and CBI cases related to the scam. The ED meanwhile told the court that it was not seeking to cancel the bail. *—PTI*

Allahabad HC disposes plea on RaGa's citizenship

LUCKNOW, 5 MAY

The Allahabad High Court's Lucknow bench has today dismissed a petition challenging Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Indian citizenship, allowing the petitioner to seek other legal avenues. The bench, comprising Justices AR Masoodi and Rajiv Singh, criticised the central government for failing to set a deadline for resolving the complaint, thus rendering the case unnecessary to keep pending. The petitioner, S Vignesh Shishir, claimed to possess documents from the British government suggesting that Gandhi holds British citizenship, disqualifying him from Indian elections. The court previously mandated the central government to provide updates on the inquiry into Gandhi's citizenship status by today. In light of the latest developments, Shishir has been advised to explore alternate legal remedies regarding his allegations against the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. *—PTI*

Akhilesh laughs after Yogi endorses cow dung paint

LUCKNOW, 5 MAY

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday took potshots at Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for advocating the use of cow dung-based paint for government buildings. "Gobarnama: BJP government's new feat," Yadav said on X. The former chief minister also posted a picture of Adityanath with the latter's remark – "cow dung-based paint should be used in government buildings" – written on it. On Sunday, Adityanath had directed officials to take concrete steps to make the cow protection centres in Uttar Pradesh self-reliant, and advocated for the use of cow dung-based paint in government buildings. *—PTI*

Pakistan test launches 120km missile

Defence Secretary meets Modi; firing continues across LoC

As part of the Exercise INDUS, Pakistan test launched a Fatah Series missile on Monday. Meanwhile, India tested a an underwater mine PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD/ JAMMU 5 MAY

Pakistan on Monday conducted a successful training launch of the Fatah Series surface-to-surface missile with a range of 120 kilometres amid heightened tensions with India.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that a Fatah Series was tested as a part of the ongoing Exercise INDUS.

"The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness and validating the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced accuracy," the statement said.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Chief of Army Staff expressed complete confidence in the operational preparedness and technical proficiency of the Pakistan Army to thwart any aggression against the country's territorial integrity.

India tests advanced underwater naval mine

India successfully test-fired an advanced underwater naval mine designed to enhance the Navy's capabilities against modern stealth ships and submarines. "The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Navy have successfully undertaken combat firing (with reduced explosive) of the Multi-Influence Ground Mine (MIGM)," the Defence Ministry said.

The MIGM is designed to enhance the Indian Navy's capabilities against modern stealth ships and submarines.

Meanwhile, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Meanwhile, the LoC saw the 11th consecutive night of ceasefire violations. *—PTI*

Locals on the Chenab banks, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Locals flock to Chenab after drop in water

JAMMU, 5 MAY

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday warned people against crossing the Chenab on foot in Jammu's Akhnoor sector after the river recorded its lowest water discharge and attracted hundreds of villagers, some of whom were seen searching for gold and silver ornaments and coins.

The drop in the water level was attributed to the river's flow being restricted through the Baglihar and the Salal dams in Ramban and Reasi districts, officials said.

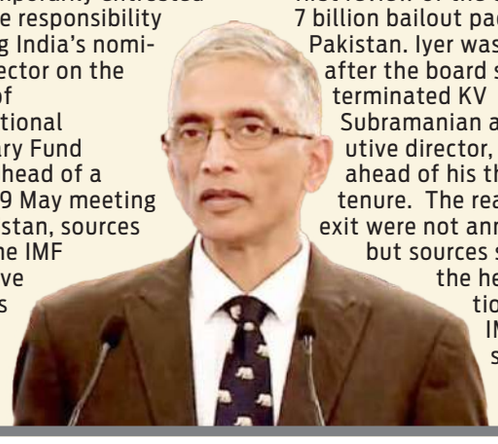
After conducting a desilting operation last week, the gates of the Baglihar and the Salal dams were closed on Monday, leading to a considerable drop in the Chenab downstream.

Sensing danger, police parties led by officers fanned out to clear the people as the water level started rising again late afternoon. "There has been rain in the catchment area and a sudden water-level increase is expected," a police officer said, requesting the people to clear out.

Local villagers said they had never witnessed the water flow decline to such a level. *—PTI*

India's Iyer joins IMF board ahead of its review of Pakistan

New Delhi, 5 May
Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director at the World Bank, was temporarily entrusted with the responsibility of being India's nominee director on the board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) ahead of a crucial 9 May meeting on Pakistan, sources said. The IMF Executive Board is set to take a call on a new USD 1.3 billion loan under a climate resilience loan programme, along with the first review of the ongoing USD 7 billion bailout package for Pakistan. Iyer was nominated after the board suddenly terminated KV Subramanian as the executive director, six months ahead of his three-year tenure. The reasons for his exit were not announced, but sources said that the he was questioning the IMF's datasets. *-PTI*



Terrorist hideout busted in J&K

Mendhar/Jammu, 5 May
Security forces unearthed a terrorist hideout in a forest area in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, leading to the recovery of five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and two wireless sets, officials said on Monday. All the ready-to-use IEDs, weighing between half-a-kg and five kg, were destroyed in a controlled explosion on-the-spot, the officials said. The hideout was busted during a joint search operation by army and special operations group of J&K police at Suranthal in Marhote area of Surankote late Sunday evening, the officials said. *-PTI*

NCW supports victim's wife after she was trolled for advocating peace

Delhi, 5 May
The National Commission for Women (NCW) extended its support to Himanshi Narwal, wife of Lieutenant Vinay Narwal who was among those killed in a recent terror attack in Pahalgam, saying it is not right to troll a woman based on her ideological expression or personal life. Himanshi Narwal had asked people not to target Muslims and Kashmiris following the 22 April. Following her statement, the slain Army officer's wife was reportedly trolled on social media platforms. The commission reminded citizens that "the dignity and respect of every woman is valuable" and called for constructive and respectful expressions even during national grief. The NCW termed the backlash "most unfortunate" and called for disagreements to remain within the Constitutional limits" *-PTI*

India asks Asian Bank to cut funding to Pakistan

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Asian Development Bank President Masato Kanda during the 58th ADB Annual Meeting in Milan, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

MILAN, 5 MAY

India demanded that the Asian Development Bank cut funding for Pakistan, as New Delhi continues to move against Islamabad in the aftermath.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in a meeting with Asian Development Bank President Masato Kanda on Monday, demanded that the bank cut its funds to Pakistan, sources said.

However, the ministry later denied the reports

According to sources, the demand for cutting the funding to Pakistan was one of the agenda of the meeting among various other issues.

As of 31 December, 2024, ADB committed 764 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance totalling USD 43.4 billion to Pakistan.

ADB's current sovereign portfolio in Pakistan includes 53 loans and 3 grants worth USD 9.13 billion.

Further, sources told ANI that India will also approach FATF (Financial Action Task Force) to include Pakistan in the grey list.

Sitharaman, meeting her Italian counterpart Giancarlo Giorgetti also reportedly demanded that Italy cut all its financing to Pakistan.

The ministry denied this rumour too, saying there was no mention of Pakistan during the meeting.

As per United Nations Development Programme website, the Italian Development Cooperation is an essential UNDP partner in Pakistan. *—PTI/ANI*

Iran FM in Pak calls for calm

ISLAMABAD, 5 MAY

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi asked India and Pakistan to "exercise restraint" and prevent escalation. During his talks with Pakistan, Tehran and Islamabad agreed that complex regional issues could be addressed through talks, a Pakistani Foreign Office statement said. "Both India and Pakistan are friendly countries to us. Pakistan is our neighbouring and brotherly country, and we were interested in the positions of our friends in Pakistan before travelling to India," Araghchi said. He will visit India on Thursday. *—PTI*

Pak Parl condemns India's campaign to malign nation

ISLAMABAD, 5 MAY

Pakistan's Parliament on Monday unanimously passed a resolution, condemning the Indian government's "mala fide campaign" to malign Pakistan in the aftermath of Pahalgam terror attack.

Ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Tariq Fazal Chaudhry tabled the resolution, which rejected "all frivolous and baseless attempts" to link Pakistan to the attack.

The resolution condemned the "orchestrated and mala fide campaign by the Indian government to malign Pakistan, which follows a familiar pattern of exploiting the issue of terrorism for a narrow political goal".

It also condemned India's "unlawful and unilateral declaration to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance in blatant violation of the treaty which clearly amounts to an act of war".

The Parliament demanded that India should be held accountable for what it called "involvement in various acts of terrorism and targeted killings in Pakistan" and reaffirmed support for the "Kashmiris for the right of self-determination".

Meanwhile, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt-Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry and Information Minister Attaullah Tarar briefed the country's political parties on the tensions.

All parties barring former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-I-Insaf attended the in-camera briefing on Sunday, the Dawn newspaper reported. *—PTI*

Influencers under govt lens for 'anti-India' posts

UNITED NATIONS, 5 MAY

A Parliamentary panel sought details from two key government ministries overseeing information flow on the action they have planned against social media platforms and influencers who "seem to be working against national interest" following the attack.

Parliament's Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology headed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey noted that some social media influencers and platforms in the country seem to be working against the interest of the country which is likely to incite violence, sources said.

The Committee in its communication to the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and Information Technology sought details of the "action taken to ban such platforms under IT Act 2000 and Information Technology Rules, 2021. *—PTI*

Punjab Assembly says no water for Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 5 MAY

The Bhagwant Mann government introduced a resolution in the Punjab Assembly on Monday, saying that no water would flow into Haryana.

Water Resources Minister Barinder Kumar Goyal presented the resolution during a special session, accusing the BJP of attempting to usurp Punjab's water rights through its influence in Haryana and at the national level, particularly with the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB).

Goyal claimed that Haryana has already exhausted its water allocation by 31 March and that recent demands for additional water were unwarranted.

While Punjab has previously provided Haryana with 4,000 cusecs of water for drinking needs, Goyal made it clear that no further allocations would be forthcoming. The resolution, which received unanimous support from the Assembly, condemned the BJP for convening the BBMB in what it termed an "unconstitutional and illegal" manner.

The Haryana Cabinet strongly condemned Punjab's move as Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini accused the neighbour of indulging in petty politics.

The BBMB, meanwhile, filed a plea in the Punjab and Haryana High Court, alleging that Punjab forcibly took over the operation and regulation of the Nangal dam and Lohand Control Room water regulation offices through police and prevented the release of water.

"The supply of water to Haryana or for that matter to any of the partner states is a matter of lifeline of the state," the BBMB's plea said.

"The action taken by Punjab is unconstitutional and illegal," according to the BBMB's plea. The plea sought a direction to forthwith remove Punjab's police force deployed "without any authority of law". *—PTI*

'VIOLENCE WAS PLANNED'

Centre must protect the borders: Mamata in Murshidabad

Mamata Banerjee PHOTO: PTI

MURSHIDABAD, 5 MAY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday accused the BJP-led Centre of spreading communal hatred and failing to protect the country's border.

After she arrived in Murshidabad for the first time since last month's riots, Banerjee said, "Some outsiders and a few religious leaders are trying to incite violence and animosity among communities. Those who are inciting riots are enemies of West Bengal."

In a sharp criticism of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), she questioned the panel's priorities visiting Murshidabad.

"Did the NHRC visit Manipur and Uttar Pradesh? They were prompt in visiting Murshidabad. Just like online payment platforms came out with front-page advertisements in newspapers a day after demonetisation in 2016, the NHRC was quick to visit Murshidabad just after the riots. That is why I am saying that it was pre-planned," Banerjee alleged.

"I have unearthed most of the conspiracy, I will expose this before the media... Unfortunately, some media houses played into the hands of the BJP in spreading canards," she claimed.

Accusing the BJP of "foul play", Banerjee claimed that the families affected by the riots were "forcibly" shifted so that they could not meet her.

"The BJP took away the families of those affected by the Murshidabad riots so that they can't meet me. Is this not kidnapping?" she asked.

The Chief Minister reiterated her warning to the Centre, saying, "Instead of inciting communal violence, efforts must be taken to protect our borders." *—PTI*

'Baseless that leftover neem wood from Puri used in Digha'

Murshidabad, 5 May
Mamata Banerjee rubbished "baseless and fabricated" allegations that surplus sacred neem wood from Puri's Jagannath temple was used in crafting the idols of the newly built temple in Digha, as tensions simmered between the two states. "Why would we use stolen neem wood?" Banerjee said. "My house has four neem trees, for their (BJP's) information." Odisha Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan too dismissed the reports. Condemning reports that Bengalis were attacked in Odisha, she said. "Is it a crime to worship Lord Jagannath in West Bengal?"

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

SC summons Raina, four others for ridiculing disabled

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Supreme Court sought the presence of five social media influencers, including 'India's Got Latent' host Samay Raina, on a plea of an NGO which alleged that they ridiculed persons with a rare disorder Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) on their show. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh asked the Mumbai Commissioner of Police to serve notice on the five influencers to ensure their presence in the court, failing which coercive action will be taken. The bench also sought the assistance of Attorney General R Venkataramani on the PIL of NGO 'Cure SMA Foundation of India' for direction on regulating social media content concerning disabled people and persons with rare disorders. —*PTI*

ED arrests former Haryana Congress MLA in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate has apprehended former Haryana Congress MLA Dharam Singh Chhoker, 61, at the Shangri-La hotel in central Delhi following a brief altercation. Chhoker was arrested around 9 pm on Sunday after the agency received intelligence that he was at the hotel bar. ED officials stated that Chhoker attempted to flee when confronted and was subsequently subdued by officers. The arrest follows multiple non-bailable warrants issued against him, as well as a proclaimed offender notification from a Gurugram PMLA court. Chhoker and his sons are accused of defrauding over 1,500 homebuyers and amassing more than Rs 500 crore. —*PTI*

Nainital school's lone candidate in class 10 exams fails

NAINITAL, 5 MAY

A higher secondary school in the Okhalkanda block of Nainital district has made headlines for achieving a zero pass percentage in the recent Class 10 state board examinations. The Government Higher Secondary School in Bhadrakot had only one student who sat for the exam, but unfortunately, the student failed in all subjects. This situation has led the school to become the only government institution in the state to report a zero pass in the Class 10 board exams. Chief Education Officer Govind Jaiswal stated that an investigation will be conducted into the incident, and appropriate action will be taken. The school employed seven teachers across various subjects; however, the arts teacher had recently been transferred to another institution. —*PTI*

Servant held for sexual assault on woman, daughter

BHUBANESWAR, 5 MAY

Police have arrested a domestic help for allegedly sexually assaulting the wife and minor daughter of his employer. The incident came to light when the woman filed a formal complaint at Badagada police station on Saturday. The accused, Saroj Kumar Behera, hailing from Jajpur district, was apprehended the following day. According to police reports, Behera had been working in the complainant's household when he reportedly took compromising photographs and videos of her and her daughter to blackmail them. Over the past few weeks, he allegedly raped them multiple times, threatening to share the explicit material if they did not comply with his demands. During interrogation, the suspect confessed to the crimes. It was revealed that he already had a pending case at Jajpur police station. —*PTI*

SC seeks fresh report on Biren audio clips

SG seeks time to study forensic report; suggests transfer of case to Manipur HC

N Biren Singh PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Supreme Court asked the Manipur government to file a fresh report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips implicating former chief minister N Biren Singh in the ethnic violence that erupted.

A bench comprising of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar opened the sealed cover report of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) submitted by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and asked the law officer to seek instruction from the state officers.

"We need a month to probe the CFSL," Mehta said, adding the matter can be taken up by the Manipur High Court as

"peace is prevailing now".

"If something wrong has been done then let us look into it rather than protecting anyone," the CJI responded.

When lawyer Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR), said the probe should be fair, the CJI said, "Now we have the President Rule there... it should not be a problem".

The matter is listed for the week commencing in 21 July.

Earlier, Bhushan had alleged that the recording showed the complicity and involvement of the state machinery in the violence against the Kuki Zo community. He said the clips had "disturbing conversations" and Singh could be heard instigating the violence and protecting the attackers."A truth lab confirmed that 93 percent it is the voice of the chief minister," Bhushan said. "Truth labs are far more reliable than the FSL reports." —*PTI*

SC rules out contempt action against Nishikant

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Supreme Court on Monday observed that it will not entertain a PIL seeking contempt action against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey for his remarks against the court and Chief Justice of India Justice Sanjiv Khanna.

"The dignity of the institution has to be protected. It cannot go on like this," PIL petitioner Vishal Tiwari told a bench comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna on Monday.

"We will not be entertaining it but we will give a short order," the CJI said.

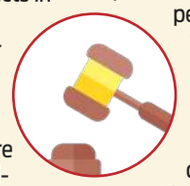
The BJP lawmaker sparked a row when he said, "(the) Supreme Court is taking the country towards anarchy" and "Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is responsible for the civil wars in the country".

The lawyer said the remarks were "contemptuous" and "hateful". —*PTI*

SC raps J'khand HC for not issuing verdict in criminal cases

New Delhi, 5 May

The Supreme Court expressed surprise that the Jharkhand High Court has not pronounced verdicts in 67 criminal appeals after reserving judgement. The bench asked all High Courts to submit report in a month on cases where judgements are pending. On Monday, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh termed the development as "disturbing" and said it will lay down



mandatory guidelines on the issue. "This cannot be allowed to happen," the bench said. The apex court passed the directions after perusing the report filed by Registrar General of the Jharkhand High Court while hearing the plea of four life convicts claiming that the High Court had reserved orders on their appeals against conviction in 2022 but did not pronounce verdicts. —*PTI*

Cash row: SC panel submits report to CJI

New Delhi, 5 May

The Supreme Court-appointed three-judge panel has submitted its report to CJI Sanjiv Khanna on the cash discovery allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma. The panel comprising Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Justice GS Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court and Justice Anu Sivaraman of the Karnataka High Court finalised its report on 3 May. —*PTI*

SC seeks Centre's reply against blocking YouTube channel 4PM

New Delhi, 5 May

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and others on a petition seeking quashing of an order blocking a widely viewed YouTube channel '4PM'.

The plea claimed that the blocking was effected by an intermediary pursuant to an undisclosed direction allegedly issued by the Centre citing vague grounds of "national security" and "public order". A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan issued notices to the Centre and others seeking their responses.

The plea, filed by Sanjay Sharma, the Editor of the digital news platform alleged that the blocking was a "chilling assault on journalistic independence" and the right of public to receive information. —*PTI*

SC junks plea of woman claiming possession of Red Fort

New Delhi, 5 May

The Supreme Court rejected the plea of a woman, who claimed to be the widow of great-grandson of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar-II, seeking possession of the Red Fort as the legal heir. On Monday, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar termed the plea as "misconceived" and "meritless" and refused to entertain the petition. The plea claimed that Begum inherited the Red Ford from her ancestor Bahadur Shah Zafar-II, who died in 1862. The CJI said if the arguments are considered then "why only Red Fort then why not forts at Agra, Fatehpuri Sikri etc". —*PTI*

SC flays ED for claims sans evidence

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Supreme Court rebuked the Enforcement Directorate on Monday for making allegations against an accused in a liquor scam case "without any evidence", saying it has become a pattern.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a petition filed by Arvind Singh seeking bail in the alleged Rs 2,000-crore liquor scam in Chhattisgarh.

"This is a pattern adopted by the ED in a number of cases. You just make allegations without any evidence," the bench said.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju alleged that Singh had earned Rs 40 crore in collusion with another man named Vikas Agarwal. When the court asked, if Agarwal had been made an accused, Raju replied that he was absconding. —*PTI*

Ahead of stir, SKM leaders placed under house arrest

CHANDIGARH, 5 MAY

Farmer leaders have claimed that several Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) leaders, including Jagjit Singh Dallewal, were put under house arrest by the Punjab government on Monday, ahead of their protest outside the Shambhu police station.

The 6 May protest was called against the Punjab government over its alleged use of repressive methods to evict protesting farmers from Shambhu and Khanauri border points in March.

Jagjit Singh Dallewal PHOTO: PTI

The farmer leaders claimed that Punjab police personnel reached their houses early morning to detain them. They said police wanted to prevent them from mobilising people for Tuesday's protest.

"Dallewal was put under house arrest at around 4am at his house in Faridkot district," a farmer leader said. Several other leaders faced a similar ordeal in different districts of the state, the farmer leaders said. Among those detained are Manjit Singh Rai and Davinder Singh.

Following his house arrest, Dallewal, who had ended his prolonged fast in April, uploaded a video on social media, saying "I am still weak and even now, I can barely walk, and yet they have confined me to my home." —*PTI*

Breach of safety directives led to stampede at festival in Goa

PANAJI, 5 MAY

The stampede at the Shree Lairai Temple in North Goa, which claimed six lives and injured over 70, has raised significant concerns regarding safety measures that were not implemented prior to the annual festival. Officials revealed that the temple committee failed to adhere to police directives to install CCTV cameras and establish proper barricading, despite a meeting held days before the event.

The police meeting on 30 April called for CCTV installation at entry and exit points, as well as crowd management measures, but the temple committee claimed they lacked the time to comply. Temple president Dinanath Gaonkar noted previous injuries from barricading as a reason for not following the instructions on safety measures. —*PTI*

The team investigating the stampede the Shree Lairai Temple in North Goa during a temple festival PHOTO: PTI

Couple, 3 daughters killed in Kanpur blaze

KANPUR, 5 MAY

A couple and their three young daughters died in a fire at a five-storey building in the Chamanganj area of Kanpur on Sunday night. The fire engulfed the Prem Nagar structure, which houses shoe manufacturing units on its lower floors.

The victims, 45-year-old Mohammad Danish and his wife, 42-year-old Nazneen Saba, were found on the fourth floor shortly after 1am. Their daughters, Sara, 15, Simra, 12, and Inaya, 7, were discovered later at around 6am. They were pronounced dead at Ursula Horseman Memorial Hospital.

Initial investigations suggest the fire may have originated in the basement, potentially caused by faulty wiring linked to the shoe factory. The situation was exacerbated by explosions from domestic LPG cylinders. The police have launched a thorough inquiry into the incident and are examining the building's compliance with safety regulations. In the meantime, residents from neighbouring buildings were evacuated to ensure their safety. —*PTI*

Firefighters douse a fire that broke out in a five-storey building in the Chamanganj area of Kanpur on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

ACTOR AJAZ KHAN FACES RAPE CHARGE

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

A case has been filed against actor Ajaz Khan following allegations of rape made by a 30-year-old woman. She claims that Khan assaulted her on multiple occasions promising help in securing roles in the film industry, as indicated by a Charkop police official.

The actor has been charged under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which pertain to rape, and an investigation is currently underway.

This is not the first time Khan has faced controversy; he was implicated in a case involving explicit content in the web series 'House Arrest, streamed on the Ullu app. Viral clips from the show depict Khan pressuring contestants, including women, into performing intimate scenarios and posing indecent questions. —*PTI*

NIA conducts raids in Neemrana firing case

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has conducted extensive searches across ten locations in Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi as part of its investigation into the 2024 Neemrana hotel shooting, which is linked to Canada-based Khalistani terrorist Arsh Dalla.

The shooting incident, which occurred on 8 September 2024, saw 35 shots fired around Hotel Highway King in Neemrana, reportedly intended to intimidate guests and extort money from the hotel's management. Investigations have identified the attackers as members of the Bambiah gang, connected to Dalla's criminal network.

During the searches, the NIA seized electronic devices

PHOTO: ANI

and other incriminating materials, alleging that these suspects facilitated financial support for acts of violence at Dalla's behest. The agency asserts that Dalla, a proclaimed offender with pending charges for various violent crimes, including terror financing, has used such acts to raise funds for banned Khalistani outfits. Investigations are ongoing as the NIA aims to dismantle active terror and gangster syndicates across India. —*PTI*

35 YEARS OF LAXITY

HC pulls up M'rashtra for holding back relief

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The Bombay High Court came down heavily on the Maharashtra government for not paying compensation to a villager after acquiring her land for a public project in 1990.

A bench of Justices Girish Kulkarni and Somasekhar Sundaresan held that acquiring a person's land without following due process of law and/or without paying compensation amounted to a violation of constitutional rights.

The order was passed on 2 May in a plea by Sumitra Shridhar Khane, who said the government acquired her land at Vhanur village in Kolhapur district in September 1990, but she hasn't been paid compensation to date.

The court noted that the case depicted the breach of the petitioner's Constitutional rights.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Irked with the government's lack of empathy, the court said the sad reality that every person in such a situation may not be so fortunate to be informed of their legal rights and then to receive legal advice.

The bench said it was "quite astonishing" that the state government would intend to evade its obligatory duty of paying compensation to Khane, it said.

As per the plea, Khane owned a hectare of land at Vhanur village in Kolhapur. In 1990, some lands in the village were notified for mass acquisition for a public project of rehabilitation of persons affected by the Dudhganga irrigation project.

- A bench of Justices Girish Kulkarni and Somasekhar Sundaresan held that acquiring a person's land without following due process of law and/or without paying compensation amounted to a violation of constitutional rights

The petitioner said pursuant to the acquisition notice, she had voluntarily handed over her land to the government in September 1990. While the government claimed that since Khane had voluntarily given the land, she was not eligible for compensation, the court noted that she had never given up her right to compensation at the time. —*PTI*

POPE'S GIFT TO GAZA

A mobile once used by the late pontiff to greet thousands is being transformed into a health clinic for children in Gaza. Following the Pope's last request, the vehicle, used during his visit to Bethlehem, is being refitted with essential medical equipment to serve as a frontline care unit in the war-torn region. The humanitarian project is being overseen by the charity organisation Caritas

PHOTO: CARITAS JERUSALEM

Punjab, Haryana in dispute again over water-sharing

Haryana and AAP-ruled Punjab are at loggerheads again, this time over the Bhakra Beas Management Board's (BBMB's) decision to release an extra 4,500 cusecs of water to the BJP-ruled state.

Punjab and BJP-ruled Haryana have been locked in a dispute over sharing of the Ravi-Beas water for decades. The row between the two states started after Haryana was carved out from the then joint Punjab in 1966.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab headed by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann convened a special session of the state Assembly on 6 May, and brought a resolution vowing not to spare even a single drop of water from its share to the neighbouring state.

Haryana has been seeking the completion of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal to get its share of 3.5 million acre feet (MAF) water. It has also been demanding that Punjab should comply with the Supreme Court orders for the completion of the canal.

However, Punjab has repeatedly maintained its stand that there is "no surplus water to share".

The canal was conceptualised for the effective sharing of water between the two states from the Ravi and Beas rivers.

The project envisages a 214kms canal, of which a 122kms stretch was to be constructed in Punjab and the remaining 92kms in Haryana.

Haryana has completed the project in its territory but Punjab, which launched the work in 1982, shelved it.

Background of current row over Bhakra water issue: Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan are partnering states that meet their requirement for different purposes, including irrigation, from the Bhakra and Pong dams. These are managed by the BBMB.

The BBMB decides the annual quota of water supply to Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan for a yearly cycle from 21 May to 21 May, each year. BBMB's Technical Committee on 23 April, decided to release extra water to Haryana.

Haryana has been seeking the completion of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal to get its share of 3.5 million acre feet water

Photo: PTI

Punjab says, On 29 April, Bhagwant Mann rejected Haryana's demand for more water through the BBMB, claiming that the neighbouring state has already utilised its share of water.

Mann also accused the BJP of exerting pressure on the Punjab government through the BBMB to meet Haryana's demand for additional supply of water. He also asked the Centre to fill reservoirs by diverting water that was flowing to Pakistan following the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty.

Punjab maintained that the state requires water for the upcoming paddy sowing season and does not have a single drop of surplus water to share.

It says Haryana has utilised its share of water in March and now they want more water for April and May months.

Mann said the BBMB had distributed 3.318 million acre feet (MAF), 2.987 MAF and 5.512 MAF water to Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab respectively this year. Haryana used its share of water by 31 March, this year after which the crisis arose, Mann had said.

Mann has maintained that Punjab is still giving 4,000 cusecs of water for drinking purposes on "humanitarian grounds" to Haryana though the neighbouring state has used 103 per cent of its allocated water. Haryana sought 8,500 cusecs of water which Punjab refused to release.

Haryana says, Haryana's BJP government has accused the AAP government of Punjab of playing "dirty politics", with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini saying this was the first time when the supply of drinking water had been halted.

On 2 May, Haryana's Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Shruti Choudhry said the state government may approach the Supreme Court over the matter.

Choudhry has claimed that Mann's statement that Haryana has utilised 103 per cent of its allocated water is entirely false.

"Such misinformation appears to be politically driven, possibly due to their recent electoral defeat in Delhi," she said.

Mann alleged that the BJP, through its government in Haryana and at the Centre, is trying to "suppress" the state. It is unfortunate that the BBMB is passing new resolutions everyday to "rob" its share of Punjab's water, he added.

The Haryana chief minister, after chairing the all-party meeting, hit out at the Punjab government, saying not following the BBMB's direction to release water was "unconstitutional, inhuman" and an attack on the federal structure of the Constitution.

On May 3, the Punjab government "boycotted" the BBMB meeting in Chandigarh, with minister Barinder Kumar Goyal calling it "unconstitutional".

On May 2, the Centre advised Punjab to release extra water to Haryana.

The board had called the meeting to work out the modalities for the release of extra water to Haryana. *—PTI*

SALAR

Amid gender rights battle, Trump targets HUD policies

As a transgender man, the words "you're a girl" gutted Tazz Webster, a taunt hurled at him from the day he moved into his St Louis apartment.

The government-subsidised building's manager also insisted on calling Webster by the wrong name, the 38-year-old said, and ridiculed him with shouts of, "You're not a real man!"

"I just felt like I was being terrorized," Webster told The Associated Press. "I felt that I was being judged and mistreated, like I was less of a human being."

Then one day in March 2022, the manager shoved Webster so hard he stumbled backward. After regaining his balance, Webster said he pushed the manager back. Four months later he was homeless.

Webster filed a complaint with US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity office, the agency tasked with investigating housing discrimination and enforcing the landmark Fair Housing Act that guarantees equal access to housing for all Americans.

Webster's harassment allegation was serious enough that it was investigated for more than two years, until the office suddenly notified him in February it was dropping his case without a finding, citing lack of jurisdiction.

The timing of the closure was not a coincidence. In the months since President Donald Trump took back the White House and installed a loyalist to lead the federal housing department, HUD Secretary Scott Turner and his team have moved swiftly and strategically to undo, uproot and remake the agency's decades of work and priorities.

In the crosshairs is an intense focus on transgender people, as HUD retreats from long-established fair-housing protections by closing their discrimination complaints and, more broadly, moving to undo the Obama-era Equal Access Rule that cemented transgender people's rights to discrimination protection in housing.

At issue is the fact that discrimination against LGBTQ+ people wasn't specifically cited in the Fair Housing Act. But the Equal Access Rule enacted in 2012 under former president Barack Obama further defined sex discrimination to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

The policy was expanded in 2016 to cover transgender people seeking help at federally funded emergency shelters, escalating opposition from the right.

In 2020, the first Trump administration unsuccessfully moved to relieve shelters of any obligation to serve transgender people. Now, advocates fear an emboldened Trump will go further and forbid shelters from accommodating gender identity altogether, as his administration announces unspecified revisions to the Equal Access Rule.

Under the rule, HUD-funded housing and programmes must provide equal access to everyone regardless of gender identity, and can't require intrusive questioning

PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS

After being left with permanent injuries in a car crash, Webster, who survives on disability payments, was grateful to move in April 2021 into an apartment near the city's 1,300-acre Forest Park, scene of the 1904 World's Fair and home to museums and a zoo.

His rent was initially less than USD 200 per month, he said. That is because Branscome Apartments had a contract with the federal government to provide subsidised housing to people with disabilities and low-income seniors.

Under the rule, HUD-funded housing and programmes must provide equal access to everyone regardless of gender identity, and can't require intrusive questioning.

Four months after the shoving incident, Webster found his door kicked in and his belongings trashed, even though, he said, he was up to date on his rent and never received an official eviction notice.

Gone were his king-size bed, dishes, Social Security card and birth certificate. Even worse was the loss of the obituary for his mother, who died when he was 12, and her necklace, a treasured memento.

Court records in an eviction case filed against Webster in April 2022 cited repeated unsuccessful efforts to serve him. After he was gone, the case was dropped. Last August, Webster filed a lawsuit in Missouri state court alleging he was illegally evicted.

The suit seeks USD 25,000 in property damage and for "severe emotional stress and trauma." The apartment has denied the allegations in court filings.

Stephen Strum, the attorney representing the building, said the pending lawsuit "merely alleges that my client did not properly follow the steps for evicting."

To Doman, Webster's case reflects a larger trend. "It's going to be harder for trans people to find safe, stable housing, and it's very hard already."Closure of Webster's case is just one of many, HUD attorneys say

Since Turner took the helm at HUD, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity has instructed staff to pause investigations of all gender identity discrimination cases, according to two HUD attorneys who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of losing their jobs or benefits.

One said letters were then issued closing the cases for lack of jurisdiction. HUD has not disclosed how many cases have been dropped.

Webster's letter and another provided to the AP cite Trump's executive order calling for the federal government to define sex as only male or female. Morris, of the ACLU, said she has never seen an executive order cited in a jurisdictional closure of a complaint.

Asked about policy changes concerning transgender discrimination, HUD spokesperson Kasey Lovett said the agency was enforcing the Fair Housing Act while implementing Trump's executive order "restoring biological truth to the federal government."

Bea Gonzalez, a transgender man, was kicked out of a suburban St Louis domestic violence shelter on a chilly night in November 2021, along with his three children, then 2, 5 and 7.

The family was just settling into a room after filling out paperwork when Gonzalez was told they had to go because he disclosed he was a transgender man.

He needed a domestic violence shelter, he said, for greater security for the children and because he feared for his safety as a trans man in a men's shelter, some of which don't accept children anyway.

The city had no domestic violence shelters for men, said his attorney Kalila Jackson.

The family was sent to a motel, but when they arrived they discovered it hadn't been paid for, and the organization that sent them there was closed. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Rajasthani folk musicians battle heat, landlessness to save ancient art

In a noisy roadside restaurant along the Delhi-Haridwar highway, Subhash Nayak sits quietly in a corner, playing his Ravanhatta. The fading notes of the ancient instrument struggle to rise above the hum of passing vehicles and chatter of diners.

Dressed in a bright turban and a satin-print waistcoat, Subhash is among the last of the Bhopas -- traditional priest-singers of Rajasthan -- who still play the Ravanhatta, a bowed string instrument believed to have been created by the demon king Ravana to worship Lord Shiva.

But today, he mostly plays Bollywood songs. "Folk music is my first choice, but people prefer Bollywood songs. They help me earn my bread," he says. Every summer, Subhash and his wife leave their home in Khabarpura village in Rajasthan's Churu district, where temperatures easily cross 45 degrees Celsius, and travel to Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and other towns in Uttar Pradesh to survive.

The reason, their 700-year-old art, Pabuji ki Phad, a spellbinding musical performance where Bhopas sing heroic tales of the folk deity Pabuji, is slowly fading away.

The heart of this struggle lies in the intersection of two pressing issues: landlessness and climate change.

According to Jitendra Sharma from Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, in Rajasthan, Pabuji is believed to be an incarnation of Lakshman. His story is painted on a cloth scroll called a Phad and folk singers called Bhopas travel from village to village singing and narrating his tale.

The Koli community weaves the cloth, while Brahmins paint the pictures. The Raikas, a pastoral community known for extensive camel herding, worship Pabuji because they believe he protects their animals. The Rajputs respect him, as Pabuji himself was a Rathore Rajput.

He says the Bhopas, like many nomadic communities, have long depended on land for their livelihood, both as a means of survival and as a source of cultural grounding.

Yet, many are landless, which leaves them without access to the basic support structures that can offer them stability, such as housing, water, electricity and government assistance.

As their connection to the land weakens, so does their ability to continue the cultural practices that define their identity. At the same time, climate change is exacerbating their plight. The rising heat is making it increasingly difficult for Subhash and his peers to perform or even travel to earn a living.

Bhopas, like many nomadic communities, have long depended on land for their livelihood, both as a means of survival and as a source of cultural grounding

PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS

Sitting in a dim, dilapidated rented room in Meerut's Sheikhpura, Amar Singh, another Bhopa from Khabarpura, recalls how elders in the community would perform Pabuji ki Phad during village ceremonies, often under the patronage of wealthy landowners.

The audience has also disappeared. The younger generation prefers songs on their phones. "We go from village to village, singing bhajans. People give whatever little they can," Singh says. His children haven't learned the art. "There is no future in it. It doesn't pay. Out of a hundred Bhopa families, only two still perform today." He fears the tradition won't last much longer. "It's slipping away like sand between fingers."

Rising heat, he says, has made things worse. With no land or home of their own, Singh says their semi-nomadic community is even more exposed to extreme weather. "You will understand when you see my village," he adds.

In Khabarpura village in Churu, his brother Dharampal shows the harsh conditions they endure during the scorching summer.

In place of a proper house, there is an asbestos roof resting on four bare walls. There's no electricity connection, so there's no fan. His six-year-old son, running a fever, lies on a jute sack spread across floor. The tiny room has just one window, a plastic water drum, two trunks, some clothes on a cot and a few utensils.

It's 1.30pm and the temperature has reached a maximum of 43 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD's Mausam app.

IMD data also shows that nine out of the 10 highest maximum temperatures in Churu have been recorded in the last 15 years, with all observations exceeding 48 degrees Celsius.

Last year, the district recorded the highest temperature of 50.5 degrees Celsius on 29 May, an all-time high since record-keeping began in 1956.

Climate experts say rising temperatures in Rajasthan are being driven by climate change.

Sumit Dookia, associate professor at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and a native of western Rajasthan, says the old social fabric of the state once supported many landless communities that kept ancient art forms alive. The Bhopas were among them.

Outside Dharampal's house, under a Khejri tree, 16 earthen pots, some broken, lie scattered. Only a few hold water.

Nearby, a traditional well used to store rainwater for daily needs is dry. The rainfall here is erratic and the future uncertain. The government has been working to provide tap water to every household under the Jal Jeevan Mission. But without land ownership, the community is left out.

Under PMAY-G, landless beneficiaries are given high priority and it is the responsibility of states and Union territories to provide land for such individuals for house construction.

Dharampal remembers a time, 20 to 25 years ago, when life was better. Their parents would perform Pabuji ki Phad up to ten times a month, earning between Rs 2,000 and Rs 5,000 each time. "We did not have land or a house, but we had enough to eat," he says.

Today, it is a different story.

Sitting on a cot beside the empty pots, his 60-year-old mother Shanti says, "Life would change if we had patta (land title) to build a home and access to electricity and water." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

2 held for planning attack on Lady Gaga's concert

RIO DE JANEIRO, 5 MAY

Police have said that two persons arrested on suspicion of planning an attack at singer Lady Gaga's concert in Rio de Janeiro were targeting LGBTQ+ people, CNN reported. According to the Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro, the two persons had tried to "recruit" people, including teenagers, to conduct coordinated attacks at a concert on Saturday, using improvised explosives and Molotov cocktails. According to police, the attack was planned to gain "notoriety on social media." In a separate development, a third person who allegedly planned to conduct a "satanist ritual by killing a child or a baby" during the concert was charged with terrorism offences, said police. The arrests were made following searches at nine addresses across Brazil, CNN reported. *—ANI*

10 tourists killed in China as boats capsize in storm

BEIJING, 5 MAY

Four boats capsized in a sudden rain and hail storm at a tourist spot in southwestern China, killing 10 people, state media said on Monday. More than 80 people fell into the Wu River when strong winds hit the scenic area in Guizhou province on Sunday afternoon, state broadcaster CCTV said. In one video shared by the state media, a man could be seen performing CPR on another person, while one of the vessels drifted upside down. Initial reports said two tourist boats had capsized, but CCTV said four boats were involved. The other two boats had no passengers, and the seven crew members were able to save themselves, it said. Seventy people were sent to a hospital, most with minor injuries. *—PTI*

Train services disrupted in Spain after 'cable theft'

MADRID, 5 MAY

Thousands of rail passengers in Spain were hit with delays after the cable used in the signalling system of the high-speed line between Madrid and Seville was stolen at four locations, Spanish rail authorities said Monday. The theft, which happened late Sunday, affected dozens of trains travelling between Madrid and Andalucía. On Monday, rail operator Renfe urged passengers of trains departing Madrid's Atocha station before 8am to not arrive early to avoid crowding. The incident came a week after a massive power outage in Spain and Portugal halted high-speed train traffic, stranding thousands of passengers.Spains Transport Minister Oscar Puente said the rail networs suffered an 'act of sabotage' rather than a theft. *—PTI*

13 Peruvian gold mine workers found dead

LIMA, 5 MAY

The bodies of 13 security guards kidnapped from a major Peruvian gold mine just over a week ago were found Sunday, Peru's Interior Ministry said. The news came as violence escalated in the Andean nation's crucial mining industry. The gold mine, La Poderosa, said a search-and-rescue team recovered the bodies on Sunday. The company blamed their abduction on informal miners allegedly linked to criminal gangs that ambushed the gold mine on 26 April. The ministry said it had deployed forces to "locate and capture those responsible for these heinous crimes." It did not give further details about the attack or its perpetrators. La Poderosa said criminal groups fighting for control of the mine have killed 39 workers since 1980. *—PTI*

An Israeli army tank manoeuvers inside the Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel; A flare fired by the Israeli army illuminates the sky over Gaza on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Israel plans to capture all of Gaza

Plans include 'powerful strikes' on Hamas targets and freeing hostages

TEL AVIV, 5 MAY

Israel approved plans on Monday to capture the entire Gaza Strip and remain in the territory for an unspecified amount of time, two Israeli officials on condition of anonymity said. The move if implemented would vastly expand Israel's operations in the Palestinian territory and likely invite fierce international opposition.

Israeli Cabinet ministers approved the plan in an early morning vote, hours after the Israeli military chief said the army was calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers.

The new plan, which the officials said was meant to help Israel achieve its war aims of defeating Hamas and freeing hostages held in Gaza, also would push hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to southern Gaza, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis.

Since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed in mid-March, Israeli offensive has killed 52,000 people and controls roughly 50% of Gaza. The fighting has displaced more than 90% of the population and turned Gaza into an uninhabitable moonscape. Israel has halted all humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The Israeli officials said the plan included the 'capturing of the strip and holding of territories' and would also seek to prevent Hamas from distributing humanitarian aid accusing it of keeping the aid for itself to bolster its capabilities. The plan also included powerful strikes against Hamas targets, officials said. adding that Israel was in touch with several countries about US President Donald Trump's plan to take over Gaza and relocate its population, under what it has termed "voluntary emigration" yet which has sparked condemnations from Israel's allies in Europe and the Arab world. *—PTI*

Palestinians clash with Israeli security forces following an army raid in the West Bank city of Nablus on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Iran tests new solid-fuelled ballistic missile

TEHRAN, 5 MAY

Iran's defense ministry Sunday unveiled the country's latest solid-fueled ballistic missile, state TV reported, against a backdrop of threats from the United States over its nuclear program.

TV showed the "Qassem Basir" ballistic missile during an interview with Defense Minister Gen. Aziz Nasirzadeh who said the missile tested on 17 April, includes improvements in both guidance and maneuverability to easily bypass anti-ballistic defense systems.

TV described the missile as having at least a 1,200-kilometer (745-mile) range which can identify and strike a designated target among multiple ones with pinpoint accuracy and without GPS guidance.

The announcement comes amid escalating tensions in the region, following the strike on Israel's Ben Gurion Airport by the Houthis. In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed significant retaliation against both the Houthis and their Iranian supporters and revealed plans to occupy all of Gaza.

Meanwhile, new dates for talks between Iran and the US, which were suspended last week is yet to be announced. *—PTI*

100% tariff on foreign films: Trump

US President Donald Trump gestures from the stairs of Air Force One upon his arrival at Joint Base Andrews on Sunday PHOTO PTI

NEW YORK, 5 MAY

The silver screen is the latest target of US President Donald Trump's tariff war who has threatened to levy 100 per cent tariffs on movies made outside US.

In a post Sunday night on his Truth Social platform, Trump said he has authorized the Department of Commerce and the Office of the US Trade Representative to slap a 100% tariff "on any and all Movies coming into our Country that are produced in Foreign Lands."

"The Movie Industry in America is DYING a very fast death," he wrote, complaining that other countries "are offering all sorts of incentives to draw" filmmakers and studios away from the US "This is a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a National Security threat. It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda!"

It wasn't immediately clear how any such tariff on international productions could be implemented. It's common for both large and smaller films to include production both in the US and other countries. Big-budget movies like the upcoming "Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning," for instance, are shot around the world.

> **A significant part of the budget of those films are spent outside the US. President Trump's imposition of 100% tariff on all films imported into the US may encourage Hollywood to move outside the US! Quite the opposite of what he intended**
> – Shekhar Kapur, Indian Filmmaker

Incentive programs for years have influenced where movies are shot, increasingly driving film production out of California and to other states and countries with favourable tax incentives, like Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Motion Picture Association didn't immediately respond to messages Sunday evening.

The MPA's data shows how much Hollywood exports have dominated cinemas. According to the MPA, the American movies produced USD22.6 billion in exports and USD15.3 billion in trade surplus in 2023.

Meawhile, Filmmaker Shekhar Kapur on Monday criticised the move saying it could backfire and instead push Hollywood filmmakers to leave the country.

"A significant part of the budget of those films are spent outside the US. President Trump's imposition of 100% tariff on all films imported into the US may encourage Hollywood to move outside the US! Quite the opposite of what he intended" the director wrote on X. *—PTI*

The anti-Hindu parade was held in Canada's Malton Gurdwara, Toronto PHOTO: X

Khalistan parade in Canada calls for 8L Hindus' deportation

TORONTO, 5 MAY

- Banners on display featured slogans like 'Kill India' and imagery attacking Indian leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Indo-Canadian groups have expressed outrage over a speech made during a Khalsa day parade in Greater Toronto Area (GTA) on Sunday calling for deportation of 8 lakh Hindus from the country.

The video of the speech which has been widely shared on social media has inflammatory rhetoric by an unidentified person on the megaphone who says "eight lakh Bharti should be taken back to Hindustan (India)."

Banners on display also featured slogans saying "Kill India' and imagery attacking Indian leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and solidarity between proponents of Khalistan and Islamabad.

Community leaders calling for action against them, point out that while there are approximately 1.8 million Indo-Canadians in the country of them eight lakh are Hindus.

The anti-Hindu parade in Toronto comes just days after Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney and the governing Liberal Party secured victory in national elections. Attacks on Hindu temples has been sparking concerns over growing extremism in Canada. Former Canda PM Justin Trudeau whose Government was supported by NDP leader and Khalistani sympathiser Jagmeet Singh was seen patronising them and relations with India hit a rock bottom. It is yet to be seen if newly elected PM will take action. *—Agencies*

Romania's Far-right Simion faces pro-EU Dan

BUCHAREST, 5 MAY

After decisively winning the most votes in Romania's first-round presidential election redo, hard-right nationalist George Simion will face a pro-Western reformist Nicusor Dan, in a pivotal runoff that could reshape the European Union and NATO member country's geopolitical direction.

The elections will be held on 18 May between the two staunchly anti-establishment candidates but ideological opposites, who have made their political careers railing against Romania's old political class.

Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician and former anti-corruption activist who founded the Save Romania Union party (USR) in 2016, ran on a pro-EU ticket, told Monday that "a difficult second round lies ahead, against an isolationist candidate."

Simion, said in a pre-recorded speech aired after polls on Sunday that, "I am here to restore constitutional order. I want democracy, I want normalcy, and I have a single objective: to give back to the Romanian people what was taken from them and to place at the center of decision-making the ordinary, honest, dignified people," he said.

Simion said that his hard-right nationalist AUR party is "perfectly aligned with the MAGA movement," capitalizing on a growing wave of populism in Europe after US President Donald Trump's political comeback. AUR rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election and has since doubled its support. Both candidates presented an anti-establishment stance. one with a conservative view and other with a pro-Western view. *—PTI*

Presidential candidate Nicusor Dan, George Simion votes at first round of elections in Bucharest, Romania, Thursday PHOTO PTI

US–Philippine forces cancel ship-sinking drill

MANILA, 5 MAY

A World War II-era Philippine navy ship to be used as a target in a combat exercise by American and the Philippine forces accidentally sank Monday hours before the mock assault, prompting the drill to be cancelled, US and Philippine military officials said.

The BRP Miguel Malvar, which was decommissioned by the Philippine navy in 2021, took on water while being towed in rough waters facing the disputed South China Sea and sank about 55km off the western Philippine province of Zambales. Nobody was onboard when the 80 year old ship sank, the Philippine military said.

American and Philippine forces would proceed with other live-fire manoeuvres off Zambales on Monday. The BRP Miguel Malvar was built as a patrol vessel for the US Navy in the 1940s and transferred to Vietnam's navy before the Philippine military acquired it, Philippine navy Capt John Percie Alcos said.

The exercise was planned near the disputed Scarborough Shoal area. *—PTI*

Philippine Marines participate in amphibious landing exercise as part of a joint US-Philippines military exercises called Balikatan or 'shoulder to shoulder', on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

HAILING FROM 71 COUNTRIES

Papal conclave most diverse in history

VATICAN CITY, 5 MAY

There is no rule that cardinals electing a new pope vote in a certain way according to their nationality or region. However, understanding their makeup in geographic terms can help explain some of their priorities as they open the conclave on Wednesday to choose a new leader of the 1.4-billion strong Catholic Church.

A cardinal who heads the Vatican's liturgy office might have a very different set of concerns than the archbishop of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. A cardinal who runs a large European archdiocese with hundreds of priests likely has other priorities than the Vatican ambassador ministering to war-torn Syria or the archbishop of Managua, Nicaragua whose church has been under siege by the government.

There are currently 135 cardinals who are under age 80 and eligible to vote in the conclave. They hail from 71 countries, making it the most geographically diverse conclave in history.

Already two have formally told the Holy See that they cannot attend for health reasons, bringing the number of men who will enter the Sistine Chapel down to 133.

A two-thirds majority or 89 votes is needed to be elected Pope.

Catholic Africans think a pope from sub-Saharan Africa is a long shot, still some are cautiously optimistic. *—PTI*

Catholic Templari Oggi or 'Templars Today' association members parade along the city centre to arrive at Martyrs Basilica in Rome PHOTO: PTI

NATIONALITIES

EUROPE:	52
ASIA: (INCLUDING MIDDLE EAST)	23
AFRICA:	17
SOUTH AMERICA:	17
NORTH AMERICA:	16
OCEANIA:	4

PHOTO:PTI

Gold jumps Rs 550 to Rs 97,350/10g

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Gold prices rose Rs 550 to Rs 97,350 per 10g in the national capital on Monday amid rise in precious metal rates in the global markets. According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 96,800 per 10g on Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also appreciated Rs 550 to Rs 96,900 per 10g on Monday. Gold had settled at Rs 96,350 per 10g in the previous market session. Meanwhile, the most traded June contract for gold futures rallied Rs 1,663, or 1.8 per cent, to Rs 94,300 per 10g on the Multi Commodity Exchange. Spot gold in the international markets rose USD 46.34, or 1.43 per cent, to USD 3,286.83 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee jumps 24P, closes at 84.33 against USD

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The rupee surged 24 paise to 84.33 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, supported by a sharp decline in crude oil prices and a positive trend in domestic equities. Robust equity inflows -- totalling Rs 2,769.81 crore -- reflect continued foreign investor interest in Indian assets, forex traders said, adding while capital inflows offer support, global uncertainties could cap gains. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 84.45 and moved between the intra-day high of 84.10 and the low of 84.47 against the greenback. This is the eighth consecutive week of a rise in the kitty, which had jumped 8.31 billion to USD 686.145 in the previous reporting week. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

White Lotus to invest in B'luru's housing projects

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Realty firm White Lotus Group will invest about Rs 700 crore to construct three new luxury residential projects in Bengaluru as part of its expansion plan. The company has already partnered with land owners for these three projects which will be launched in the current 2025-26 fiscal. "We are planning to launch three luxury housing projects this fiscal year comprising 20 lakh sq feet of saleable area," White Lotus Group founder and CEO Pavan Kumar told PTI. He said the company will develop around 215 luxury villas in two projects, while it will sell 330 plots for villas in another 45-acre project. He said the company will meet this investment largely from internal accruals. *—PTI*

Airtel's B2B arm launches 'Business Name Display'

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Bharti Airtel's B2B arm on Monday announced the launch of "Business Name Display" (BND), a solution that would enable enterprises to display their brand name on recipient's mobile screen during outgoing calls. The solution was piloted with over 250 businesses across sectors including banking, retail, food delivery, mobility, quick commerce, courier and logistics. These businesses used 1.5 million plus phone numbers to make calls in last 30 days, leading to increase in customer engagement, Airtel said. The service enables businesses to display their brand name on recipient's mobile screen during outgoing calls, a process that would foster trust and help customers distinguish legitimate business calls from spam. *—PTI*

War will impact Pak's economy more than India's

Moody says, Pak's access to external funding will be hit

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

A persistent increase in tensions between India and Pakistan is expected to impair Pakistan's access to external financing and pressure its foreign-exchange reserves, according to Moody's.

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves remain well below what is required to meet its external debt payment needs for the next few years, the global rating agency noted in a report on Monday.

In India, the macroeconomic conditions are stable, bolstered by moderating but still high levels of growth and strong public investment and healthy private consumption, Moody's said in the report.

In a scenario of sustained escalation in localized tensions between the countries, Moody's does not expect major disruptions to India's economic activity because it has minimal economic relations with Pakistan.

Less than 0.5 per cent of India's total exports in 2024 was to Pakistan. However, higher defence spending may potentially weigh on India's fiscal strength and slow its fiscal consolidation, the global rating agency asserted.

"Our geopolitical risk assessment for Pakistan and India accounts for persistent tensions, which have, at times led to Limited military response," Moody's said.

"We assume that flare-ups will occur periodically, as they have throughout the two sovereigns' post-independence history, but that they will not lead to an outright, broad-based military conflict," it predicted.

X@SHIVAANALYTICS

India has sharply downgraded diplomatic ties with Pakistan after the 22 April terrorist attack on tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, leading to the death of 26 individuals and several other injured, mostly tourists.

Amongst others, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, which would over a period of time will severely reduce Pakistan's water supply.

Sustained escalation in tensions with India would likely weigh on Pakistan's growth and hamper the government's ongoing fiscal consolidation, setting back Pakistan's progress in achieving macroeconomic stability, Moody's said. *—ANI*

Sensex climbed nearly 295 points and Nifty rose 114.45 points

PHOTO: PTI

Market closes at 4-months high

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

Benchmark BSE Sensex climbed nearly 295 points to close at an over four-month high on Monday following sustained foreign fund inflows and a sharp correction in global crude oil prices.

Rising for the second in a row, the 30-share BSE barometer gained 294.85 points or 0.37 per cent to settle at 80,796.84, marking its highest close in 2025 so far. During the day, it jumped 547.04 points or 0.67 per cent to 81,049.03.

The NSE Nifty rose 114.45 points or 0.47 per cent to 24,461.15, its highest closing level in 2025.

Among Sensex firms, Adani Ports jumped 6.29 per cent amid reports that Gautam Adani's representatives met with US administration officials to seek the dismissal of criminal charges in a bribery probe.

All other listed Adani group stocks, including Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports, Adani Power and Adani Green Energy, ended with sharp gains.

Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Eternal, Power Grid, ITC, Tata Motors, Asian Paints and Hindustan Unilever were also among Sensex gainers.

Among the laggards, Kotak Mahindra Bank tanked 4.57 per cent after the firm reported a 7.57 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 4,933 crore for the March quarter of FY25, primarily due to elevated stress in the microlending book.

State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Titan and IndusInd Bank were among the other losers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,769.81 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dropped 1.45 per cent to USD 60.40 a barrel. *—PTI*

Kotak Bank loses Rs 19,866 cr as shares drop by 5%

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank on Monday tanked nearly 5 per cent after the firm reported a 7.57 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the March quarter of FY 2024-25.

The stock declined by 4.57 per cent to settle at Rs 2,085.05 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it dropped 5.79 per cent to Rs 2,058.35.

On the NSE, shares of the firm fell by 4.58 per cent to Rs 2,085. Intra-day, the stock tumbled 5.82 per cent to Rs 2,058 apiece.

The stock emerged as the biggest laggard among the Sensex and Nifty firms.

The company's market valuation eroded by Rs 19,866.61 crore to Rs 4,14,560.11 crore.

Kotak on Saturday posted a 7.57 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 4,933 crore for the March quarter of FY 2024-25, primarily due to elevated stress in the microlending book.

The private sector lender's net profit during the reporting quarter on a standalone basis decreased 14 per cent to Rs 3,552 crore, from the year-ago period's Rs 4,133 crore.

The core net interest income of the bank rose 5 per cent to Rs 7,284 crore during the reporting quarter, while the other income grew 7 per cent to Rs 3,182 crore.

The customer assets were up 13 per cent, while the net interest margin narrowed sharply to 4.97 per cent against 5.28 per cent in the year-ago period. *—PTI*

The stock emerged as the biggest laggard among the Sensex and Nifty firms

PHOTO: X@NIVESHNITI

State Bank shares slump over 2% after Q4 earnings

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Shares of State Bank of India went lower by over 2 per cent on Monday after the firm reported an 8.34 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit for the January-March quarter.

The company's stock dipped 2 per cent to Rs 783.65 on the BSE. At the NSE, it went lower by 2.25 per cent to Rs 782 apiece.

State Bank of India on Saturday reported an 8.34 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 19,600 crore for the January-March quarter compared to Rs 21,384 crore a year ago, impacted by a decline in net interest margins.

On a standalone basis, the net profit of the country's largest lender declined to Rs 18,642 crore in the March quarter, from Rs 20,698 crore in the year-ago period. The core net interest income of the bank increased 2.69 per cent to Rs 42,775 crore, despite a loan growth of over 12 per cent due to a lower net interest margin.

Total income on consolidated basis, however, increased to Rs 1,79,562 crore in the last quarter of FY 2024-25 (FY25) from Rs 1,64,914 crore in the year-ago period. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X@ETMARKETS

RBI may cut rate, inflation to stay below 3%: SBI

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

According to SBI report, the Reserve Bank may cumulatively cut the key interest rate in the range of 125-150 basis points this fiscal amid benign inflationary patterns and India's retail inflation is likely to stay below 3 per cent till June 2025.

The study suggested that the central bank should go for "jumbo" rate cuts of 50 bps as it would be more effective.

The sharp moderation in consumer price index based inflation, hitting a 67-month low of 3.34 per cent in March 2025 due to sharp correction in food inflation, bodes well for lowering the average CPI headline forecast for FY2025-26 below 4 per cent now, the report said.

The report highlighted a sharp fall in consumer price inflation (CPI) in March 2025, which dropped to a 67-month low of 3.34 per cent, mainly due to a significant correction in food prices.

This is expected to help keep the average CPI inflation below 4 per cent for the full FY26. SBI now expects CPI to remain below 3 per cent in the Q1 of FY26. *—PTI*

Maruti Suzuki market share dips below 40% in April

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Maruti Suzuki India's share in the domestic passenger vehicle market fell below 40 per cent in April, while Mahindra & Mahindra emerged as the second largest player in the month, according to data released by FADA.

Long-time number two Hyundai Motor India Ltd has been pushed to the fourth place with a market share of 12.47 per cent in April. Tata Motors maintained its third place with a market share of 12.59 per cent.

In April 2025, total domestic passenger vehicle retail sales stood at 3,49,939 units compared to 3,44,594 units in April 2024, a growth of 1.55 per cent, Federation of Automotive Dealers Associations (FADA) said.

Maruti Suzuki's retail sales stood at 1,38,021 units in April 2025 with a market share of 39.44 per cent. In the same month last year, the company had clocked retail sales of 1,39,173 units with a market share of 40.39 per cent.

In 2024–25, company had a market share of 40.25 per cent with retail of 16,71,559 units. In 2023–24, it registered retail sales of 16,08,041 units with a market share of 40.6 per cent.

Biggest gainer in April this year was Mahindra & Mahindra due to robust SUV sales. *—PTI*

Biggest gainer in April this year was Mahindra & Mahindra due to robust SUV sales

PHOTO: MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA WEBSITE

Govt reviewing BPSL order: DFS Secy

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The government is reviewing the Supreme Court judgment ordering liquidation of Bhushan Power and Steel (BPSL), and will "soon" finalise the way forward in the case, Department of Financial Services (DFS) **Secretary M Nagaraju** said on Monday.

"I have already reviewed (the order) with all the lenders. We have taken a position; we have studied the judgment; we have got our advocates' view on the judgment. Now we are taking a view in the government on how we approach the judgment. We will finalise soon," he said.

An SC bench of Justice Bela Trivedi and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma had on Friday rejected JSW Steel's Rs 19,350-crore bid to acquire BPSL as it had not abided by the resolution plan for over two years, and ordered liquidation of the asset.

This was seen as a jolt to the lenders, who now stand to get a bigger haircut on their receivables, as the liquidation processes typically yield lower sums. *— PTI*

US Fed Reserve may defy Trump on rates

US President Donald Trump

PHOTO: PTI

WASHINGTON, 5 MAY

The Federal Reserve will likely keep its key short-term interest rate unchanged on Wednesday, despite weeks of harsh criticism and demands from President Donald Trump that the Fed reduce borrowing costs.

After causing a sharp drop in financial markets two weeks ago by saying he could fire Fed Chair Jerome Powell, Trump subsequently backed off and said he had no intention of doing so.

Still, he and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent have said the Fed should cut rates.

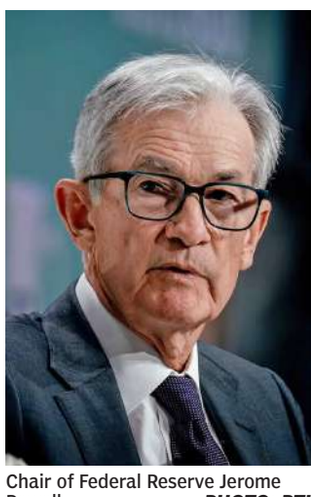
They argue that inflation has steadily cooled and high borrowing costs are no longer needed to restrain price increases.

The Fed sharply ramped up its short-term rate in 2022 and 2023 as pandemic-era inflation spiked.

Separately, Elon Musk last Wednesday suggested that his Department of Government Efficiency should look more closely at the Fed's spending.

The heightened scrutiny shows that even as the Trump administration backs off on its threats to fire Powell, the Fed is still subject to unusually sharp political pressures, despite being an independent agency.

Powell said they want to see how Trump's tariffs affect the economy before making any moves. *—PTI*



Chair of Federal Reserve Jerome Powell

PHOTO: PTI

'PRICE HIKE A PROBLEM'

'Labour shortage due to heatwaves impacting cement demand'

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Labour shortage due to heatwaves in some regions coupled with the latest hike in cement prices have affected demand for the key construction material, according to Prabhudas Lilladher.

Prabhudas Lilladher has put out a report after having interacted with cement dealers across regions in India to access the demand and price scenario in April 2025.

Based on the discussions with the dealers, the financial advisory firm found that demand remained steady across most of the regions during the month.

"However, prices declined in certain markets due to extreme heatwaves affecting labor availability, which in turn weighed on demand," their report read.

The ongoing marriage and harvesting seasons further added pressure on demand across several regions, it added.

Among key markets, Chennai and Hyderabad witnessed steep price hikes of Rs 30-40 per bag, which dealers reported led to a decline in sales.

- The ongoing marriage and harvesting seasons further added pressure on demand across several regions, it added.

In contrast, Delhi and Patna saw increases of Rs 10 per bag. Meanwhile, Western and Central regions recorded flat month-on-month pricing or marginal declines of up to Rs 5 per bag.

As a result, all-India average cement price rose by Rs 10 per bag month-on-month, reaching Rs361 per bag by April-end.

"Going forward, dealers are anticipating further price hikes of Rs 10- 15 per bag across regions as demand remains steady," the report read.

Prabhudas Lilladher expects demand for cement to remain stable in the near term with a strong urban property market and improving rural housing segment activities. *—ANI*

All-India average cement price rose by Rs 10 per bag month-on-month, reaching Rs361 per bag by April-end

PHOTO: X @BSINDIA

PHOTO: PTI

Indian weightlifter Parv Choudhary wins bronze medal

LIMA, 5 MAY

Parv Choudhary has won a bronze at the IWF Youth and Junior World Weightlifting in Lima. Competing in the youth boys' 96kg category, Parv achieved a total lift of 315kg, with a 140kg lift in the snatch and a clean and jerk lift of 175kg, which earned him a silver medal in that discipline. His achievement marks India's third medal in this tournament, complementing earlier bronze medals won by Jyoshna Sabar in the 40kg category and Harsabardhan Sahu in the 49kg category. Unlike the Olympic Games, this championship awards medals separately for snatch, clean and jerk, and total lift, showcasing the diverse skills of the competitors. *—PTI*

Wolfsburg fires Hasenhüttl as coach after 8 losses

WOLFSBURG, 5 MAY

Wolfsburg has dismissed Ralph Hasenhüttl as head coach following a disappointing run of eight matches without a victory in the Bundesliga. The decision came just two games before the end of the season, with the club announcing that Hasenhüttl, along with his assistant coaches, was "relieved of his duties with immediate effect." CEO Peter Christiansen cited recent results as the catalyst for the decision, following a humiliating 4-0 loss to Borussia Dortmund in his final game. Daniel Bauer, formerly in charge of the club's Under-19s, has been appointed interim head coach for the remaining fixtures against Hoffenheim and Borussia Mönchengladbach. *—PTI*

China's Xintong leads snooker world event final

SHEFFIELD, 5 MAY

Zhao Xintong is on the brink of becoming the first world snooker champion from China after establishing an 11-6 lead over Mark Williams in the final at the Crucible Theatre. The 28-year-old left-hander, who recently returned to competitive play following a 20-month ban related to a match-fixing scandal, dominated the early session, leading 7-1. Williams, a seasoned player aiming to become the oldest world champion at 50, fought back by winning five of nine frames in the evening session. However, Zhao remains in a strong position as he requires only seven more frames to clinch snooker's most prestigious title. The final continues with two sessions scheduled for Monday. Zhao won the UK Championship in 2021. *—PTI*

Soccer bodies face pressure to fund dementia care

LONDON, 5 MAY

Britain's soccer organisations may soon be required to fund care costs for former players suffering from brain conditions linked to heading the ball. Proposed changes in the Football Governance Bill aim to classify these issues as "industrial injuries" and establish a scheme for affected players. Advocates argue that existing support measures are inadequate, prompting calls for industry stakeholders, including the football associations, to contribute to care costs. The PFA has initiated the Brain Health Fund, initially valued at £1 million, which has supported 121 families, but campaigners criticize its effectiveness. *—PTI*

Playoff favourites MI & GT set for explosive IPL clash

MI need 2 wins from final 3 games for a direct playoff spot

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

Two IPL playoff favourites, Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans, will clash in a high-intensity showdown on Tuesday, with both sides eyeing crucial wins to secure top-four finishes.

Mumbai Indians (MI), currently third with the best Net Run Rate, need two wins from their final three games to seal a direct playoff spot. Having won four of five matches at home, MI will play two of their remaining fixtures at Wankhede Stadium.

Gujarat Titans (GT), in fourth, have four matches left and a similarly strong home record in Ahmedabad. Led by Shubman Gill, GT also need two wins to virtually guarantee a playoff berth.

GT's top three – B Sai Sudharsan (504 runs), Jos Buttler (470), and Gill (465) – have been dominant. However, they'll be tested by MI's formidable bowling unit comprising Trent Boult (16 wickets), Hardik Pandya (13), Jasprit Bumrah (11), and Deepak Chahar (9). MI have won six straight and haven't conceded 200+ in that streak.

While GT excel when setting targets, they've also won all three matches chasing. But their middle order, barring Sherfane Rutherford (201), remains relatively untested.

Hardik Pandya, instrumental in MI's turnaround, has contributed with bat and ball (157 runs, 13 wickets).

He now leads MI against the side he captained to their 2022 title.

MI's batting depth includes in-form Suryakumar Yadav (475), Ryan Rickelton (334), and a resurgent Rohit Sharma (293). All-rounders Will Jacks, Tilak Varma (239), and Naman Dhir (155) add further strength.

GT's bowlers have stepped up in Kagiso Rabada's absence. Prasidh Krishna leads the IPL with 19 wickets,

supported by Mohammed Siraj (14) and R Sai Kishore (12). Rabada has rejoined the squad, but his eligibility remains uncertain due to a provisional suspension earlier this year. *—PTI*

MI VS GT

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	6
MI Won:	4
GT Won:	2

MI VS GT Match starts at 7.30 pm IST

ICC MEN'S RANKINGS

India dominate in white-ball formats

DUBAI, 5 MAY

India have retained their top spots in both ODIs and T20Is, reinforcing their white-ball dominance in the latest ICC annual men's rankings, while Australia continue to lead the Test format.

The updated rankings, released Monday, consider all matches played since May 2024 at full weight, and those from the previous two years at 50 per cent.

India, winners of the ICC Champions Trophy, strengthened their ODI position with 124 rating points, up from 122. Runners-up New Zealand moved to second, overtaking Australia, now third. Sri Lanka rose to fourth after home series wins over India and Australia, pushing Pakistan to fifth and South Africa to sixth. Afghanistan climbed to seventh, while England dropped to eighth.

West Indies advanced to ninth, ahead of Bangladesh in 10th.

In T20Is, world champions India lead with a reduced margin over second-placed Australia—nine points from the previous ten. England, New Zealand, West Indies, and South Africa occupy ranks three to six. Sri Lanka climbed to seventh, ahead of Pakistan. *—PTI*

PIASTRI BAGS 3RD F1 WIN AT MIAMI

MIAMI GARDENS, 5 MAY

Oscar Piastri secured his third consecutive Formula 1 victory and fourth win of the season at the Miami Grand Prix on Sunday, extending his championship lead to 16 points over teammate Lando Norris.

Two years after driving the slowest car in Miami, Piastri dominated the race for McLaren, beating Norris in a commanding 1-2 finish. "To now have won the Grand Prix by over 35 seconds to third is unbelievable," said Piastri, who became the first McLaren driver since Mika Hakkinen in 1997–98 to win three straight F1 races.

Verstappen, who welcomed his first child on Friday, finished fourth after aggressively holding off Norris early in the race. Norris, who won the sprint on Saturday, accused Verstappen of forcing him off track during a tense early battle. The stewards took no action. *—PTI*

RUUD WINS 1ST MASTERS 1000 TITLE AT MADRID OPEN

Casper Ruud of Norway poses with the championship trophy after beating Jack Draper of Britain in the final to win the ATP Madrid Open. *PHOTO: X*

MADRID, 5 MAY

Casper Ruud made history on Sunday by becoming the first Norwegian to win a Masters 1000 title, defeating Jack Draper 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 in a thrilling Madrid Open final.

The 26-year-old, ranked 15th going into the tournament, overcame a 5-3 deficit in the first set and sealed the win with a crucial break at 2-2 in the deciding set.

Celebrating his win with arms raised on the Caja Mágica clay, Ruud called it "an incredible feeling," adding: "It's been a long time coming."

This victory sees Ruud re-enter the ATP top 10, rising to world No. 7 on Monday. He credited Draper's strong form, saying, "If I didn't bring my A-plus game, I was going to be whooped."

A 13-time tour title winner, Ruud had previously fallen short in two Masters 1000 finals — against Alcaraz in Miami (2022) and Tsitsipas in Monte Carlo (2023). His win further cements his status as a clay-court powerhouse, with more clay titles than any other player since 2020.

Draper, 23, who won Indian Wells in March, was disappointed but gracious. "You deserve this," he told Ruud. "This sport is brutal, but I think this loss is going to make me better."

The tournament was marred by a blackout that postponed 22 matches early last week. Injuries also impacted the draw, with Alcaraz withdrawing and Djokovic falling early to Matteo Arnaldi.

In the women's final, Aryna Sabalenka defeated Coco Gauff on Saturday. *—PTI*

Paine slams secrecy in Rabada's failed drug test

SYDNEY, 5 MAY

Former Australia captain Tim Paine has criticised the lack of transparency around Kagiso Rabada's failed drug test, questioning the handling of the matter by authorities.

Rabada said he is serving a provisional suspension after testing positive for a banned recreational drug. He had left the IPL in April after two games with Gujarat Titans, citing "personal reasons" — a label Paine strongly disputes.

"It stinks," Paine told SEN Radio. "Calling it a personal issue when a professional athlete tests positive during a tournament is misleading. That's a breach of contract, not just a personal matter."

The positive test reportedly occurred during the SAT20 league in January. Paine argued it was wrong to quietly pull Rabada from the IPL and allow the issue to fade without scrutiny. "People deserve to know what he's taken, how long he's out for, and who sanctioned it."

Under WADA rules, recreational drug use can carry bans ranging from three months to four years, depending on circumstances. Reductions apply if the use is proven unrelated to performance and if the athlete enters a treatment program. Despite the ban, Rabada is reportedly eligible for South Africa's World Test Championship final squad against Australia in June. *—PTI*

SRIKANTH, YOUNG SHUTTLERS SEEK REVIVAL AT TAIPEI

TAIPEI, 5 MAY

As the Taipei Open, boasting a prize pool of USD 240,000, kicks off on Tuesday, former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth and a cadre of young Indian badminton talents are aiming to turn around their recent dip in form. Srikanth has battled injuries and inconsistency, plummeting to No. 61 in the BWF rankings. Following a highlight semifinal run at the Swiss Open in March, he seeks to regain momentum, starting with a match against compatriot S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian.

Young talents include 20-year-old Ayush Shetty, who faces third seed Lee Chia Hao, and the promising Anupama Upadhyaya, who secured a win against England's Miu Lin Ngan at the Sudirman Cup.

Other participants include Tharun Mannepalli and Meiraba Luwang Maisnam, while Anmol Kharb and Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj aim for strong showings in the women's draw. *—PTI*

Italian Open welcomes Jannik Sinner after doping ban

ROME, 5 MAY

The Italian Open this week not only draws attention for its tennis but heralds the return of Jannik Sinner, recently released from a three-month doping ban. The ban's expiration coincides with local excitement as Sinner, the nation's first-ever top-ranked player, is set to practice at the renowned venue, drawing a sellout crowd.

After winning the Australian Open in January, Sinner's absence has raised questions about a recent settlement addressing WADA's appeal regarding accidental steroid contamination. The arrangement allows Sinner to participate without a Grand Slam penalty, coincidentally kicking off at his home tournament, which precedes the French Open later this month.

Noting Sinner's first-round bye, local attention spans beyond him, as Italian tennis flourishes with Lorenzo Musetti in the top 10.

High hopes rest on players like Matteo Berrettini, who is regaining form, and promising newcomers such as 17-year-old Tyra Grant. *—PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Inter vs Barcelona tied; PSG edges Arsenal

PARIS, 5 MAY

Inter Milan heads into the return leg of their Champions League semifinal against Barcelona on Tuesday, buoyed by a 3-3 draw in the first leg that saw them score three away goals. However, the Italian side is wary of Barcelona's firepower, especially with 17-year-old sensation Lamine Yamal currently in stunning form.

Inter raced to a 2-0 lead before Yamal's strike kickstarted a spirited comeback from Barcelona at Camp Nou. Alongside Yamal, the threat of Raphinha looms large—he boasts 12 goals in the competition, outpacing star striker Robert Lewandowski, who has been battling a minor leg injury.

Despite the offensive talent, Barcelona's defensive vulnerabilities remain a concern for coach Hansi Flick, who faces scrutiny following his decision to keep Wojciech Szczesny as goalkeeper over the fit-again Marc-André ter Stegen.

Inter Milan's Italian defender Francesco Acerbi challenges Barcelona's Lamine Yamal during the UEFA Champions League in Barcelona on April 30, 2025. *PHOTO: X@ LLUIS GENE.*

Barcelona seeks a sixth Champions League title, while Inter aims for their fourth, having previously defeated Barcelona in a tense 2010 semifinal.

In the other semifinal, Arsenal faces Paris Saint-Germain. *—PTI*

Madrid edges out Celta Vigo 3–2 in La Liga

MADRID, 5 MAY

Real Madrid narrowly defeated Celta Vigo 3–2 on Sunday, maintaining their pursuit of La Liga leaders Barcelona ahead of their upcoming "clasico." Kylian Mbappé netted twice, and Arda Güler added a third for Madrid, who took a commanding 3-0 lead early in the second half at the Santiago Bernabéu.

Despite the advantage, Celta fought back with goals from Javi Rodríguez and Williot Swedberg, creating a tense finish as Madrid's Thibaut Courtois made crucial saves to secure the win. Madrid's coach Carlo Ancelotti remarked, "It was a great opportunity. We're going to prepare well for Sunday's game, which I'm not saying will be decisive, but almost."

Barcelona, maintaining their four-point lead, came from behind to beat last-placed Valladolid 2-1 on Saturday, with several key players rested ahead of their Champions League semi-final against Inter Milan. *—PTI*

Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe scores his team's third goal during the Spanish league football match against RC Celta de Vigo at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid on Sunday. *PHOTO: X ARABNEWS*